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Our Old Actors

Henry Barton Baker

1911

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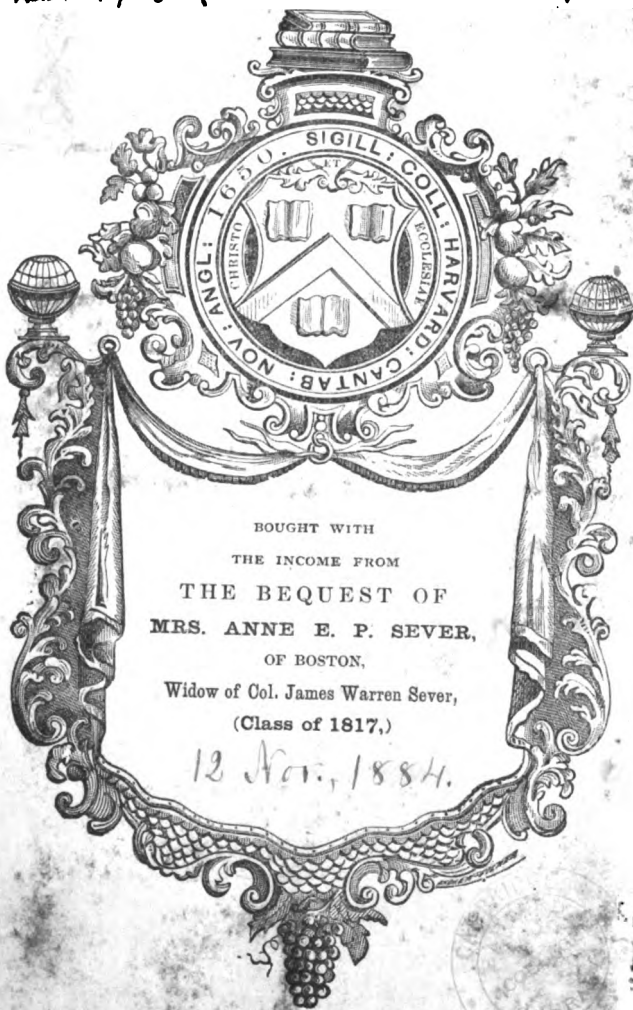






FIG. 10. 1790.

Our Old Actors.

BY

HENRY BARTON BAKER.

With Portraits.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH a portion of the materials of these volumes has appeared in the pages of "Temple Bar," this work claims to be much more than a mere reprint. Detached Essays have been linked together so as to form a chronological history of actors and acting from Shakespeare to Macready. Some of the Essays which have appeared have been considerably expanded, others have been relieved of irrelevant matter, and a number of new sketches have been introduced.

As it was necessary to draw the line somewhere, however arbitrarily, I have omitted, with very few exceptions, the names of all actors whose stage career extended beyond Macready's. Many admirable actors are thus unmentioned who well deserve a place in every history of their profession; but besides want of space I have no desire to enter the arena of contemporary criticism. Neither must this work be regarded as a Biographical

Dictionary; the names of many of our old actors will be sought here in vain, but they are only those which have fallen into oblivion, and to which little or no interest is now attached.

It is said that the actor's genius dies with him and becomes merely a tradition to succeeding gene-

London, 1878.

Part I.



BURBADGE AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES.

OUR OLD ACTORS.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

The Mystery and Miracle Plays—Moralities and Interludes—Great Increase of Actors—The City and the Players—The Seven Theatres—Size and Prices of Admission—Scenery—Salathiel Pavy—Dick Tarleton—Anecdotes of his Tricks and “Gags.”

ENGLAND was one of the first countries in which the Mystery and Miracle plays of the Middle Ages were performed. The monks introduced them to supersede the profane mummeries, remnants of paganism and of the ancient fairs, and to impart to the ignorant populace such knowledge of Scripture as they found convenient. Early in the twelfth century the Miracle play of St. Catherine was performed at Dunstable; from 1268 to 1577 there were annual exhibitions of this kind at Chester; and at York from 1408 to 1546. Churches and chapels were the earliest theatres, and monks and parish clerks the first actors. But sometimes, even as early

as the fifteenth century, tradesmen, artificers, and guilds got up performances at their own expense. The Miracle plays were acted upon temporary erections of timber; there were three scaffolds or platforms—the bottom one represented hell, the middle earth, the topmost heaven. The Virgin, the Saints, the Saviour, even the Supreme Being, were the characters; the subjects were selected from striking incidents in the Bible, or in the Lives of the Saints, such as the Fall of Man, the Flood, the Passion of Christ, the Crucifixion. These dramas were destitute of point or plan, and merely represented the stories according to the letter of Scripture or legend.*

In the time of Henry the Sixth a new species of dramatic entertainment was invented, called the Morality, which very soon superseded the older form. In this was contained the first germ of the drama proper. It was more artificial in construction, being usually an allegorical representation of the passions, vices and virtues; there was some attempt at a plot, and even at delineation of character. The favourite personage of these productions was "The Vice," a witty, sarcastic, and mischievous attendant of the devil, who was afterwards developed into the clown

* To such an extent was this realism carried, that in an old Mystery play entitled "The Old and New Testaments," Adam and Eve appeared perfectly naked. It would have been considered impious to have represented them otherwise than they are described in Genesis.

of the Elizabethan drama. The profanity, blasphemy, and licentious indecency of these exhibitions were such that in 1542 Bishop Bonner forbade all ecclesiastics henceforth appearing upon the public stage.

The Interlude, of which John Heywood was the inventor, somewhere in the third decade of the sixteenth century, was another step towards the modern drama; it was, however, merely a piece of gross buffoonery, half extemporaneous, although it was the immediate predecessor of our first English comedy, if that term can be applied to such a work as "*Ralph Roister Doister*," written in the reign of Edward the Sixth. But the "*Moralities*" continued to be represented by guilds and mechanics down to the end of Elizabeth's reign. In "*A Midsummer Night's Dream*" Shakespeare has bequeathed us an exquisitely comic picture of such actors.

The theatre was usually an inn-yard, and the galleries that surrounded the ancient hostelries gave the first idea of the subsequent buildings. Even in Shakespeare's time the pit was indifferently called the pit or the yard. There were attempts, even as far back as the *Miracle* plays, at scenic effects and stage properties. In a drawing of the time of Henry the Sixth, we are shown a scene in a "*Morality*" where there are five stages and a castle in the centre. In one entitled "*Mary Magdalen*," mention is made of the introduction of a castle and a ship. In another, "*Cain*," the action necessitated a change of

scene from the exterior to the interior of a cottage, in which a peasant's wife was discovered in bed, with an infant in a cradle beside her. According to a stage direction in "Noah's Flood," Noah goes into the ark, which is ordered to be boarded round about, and painted with all the various kinds of beasts and fowls. In a play on the conversion of St. Paul, there is a direction for the use of thunder.

The first legislative enactment in which the profession of actor is mentioned is one of the reign of Edward the Fourth, which exempts all players from the sumptuary laws. In a book of expenses of the reign of Henry the Seventh, there is an entry of one hundred shillings given as a reward to the King's players. In the household books of this sovereign, from 1492 to 1509, several companies are mentioned—that of the King, of the Duke of Buckingham, of the Earls of Oxford and Northumberland; and according to the same authority a company was attached to each of the following cities and towns: London, Coventry, Wycombe, Mile End, Wymborne Minster, and Kingston. These, however, were only the actors of the guilds, or servants of the nobility, trained to represent Moralities and Mummeries, and not at all answering to the modern idea of theatrical companies. Licenses for performing plays were granted by Henry the Eighth and Queen Mary, and in the latter reign, Strype, in his *Memorials*, speaks of "certain lewd persons naming themselves to be

the servants of Sir Francis Lake, and wearing his livery or badge on their sleeves," wandering in the north and representing plays and interludes, reflecting on the queen and her consort, and the formalities of the mass.* In 1526 theatrical amusements had become so fashionable, that it was usual, on the celebration of any notable event in families of distinction, and on all festivals and holidays, either to have a play represented by the performers attached to the house, retainers of some kind trained to that purpose, or to hire such substitutes as Bottom and his companions.

An Elizabethan writer distinctly states that before 1570, "he neither knew nor read of any such theatres, set stages or playhouses as have been purposely built within man's memory." Unless the performances were given in private houses or the Universities, inn-yards still sufficed, as they had done a century and more previously. In 1572, so greatly had the number of players increased, that it was enacted that all who could not show licences signed by two justices of the peace should be dealt with as rogues and vagabonds. The servants and mechanics, some from pride, some from idleness,

* The custom of introducing living persons upon the stage and holding them up to abuse and ridicule still obtained in Shakespeare's time, and is glanced at by Hamlet in the lines to Polonius: "After your death you had better have a bad epitaph, than their (the players) ill report while you live."

some because they felt within them the stirrings of nobler talents, had deserted their legitimate and taken up wholly with their occasional callings. Such was no doubt the origin of the earliest theatrical companies. In 1586 Walsingham mentions two hundred players as being in or near London; this statement is perhaps an exaggeration, and of course includes not only the regular companies but the unlicensed troupes who played in inn-yards.

In 1574 the first royal license, still extant, was granted to James Burbadge (the father of Richard) and other players of Lord Leicester's, giving them the right to play within the city of London and its liberties, or any cities or boroughs, throughout England. This was strongly opposed by the mayor and aldermen of London, already tainted with puritanism, and it would seem to a certain extent effectually, for it is doubtful whether the actor ever obtained a footing within the jurisdiction of those potentates. In 1575 we find the players petitioning to be allowed to carry out the terms of their license if only in the winter months. The reply of the city would seem to confirm the view I have taken of the origin of the profession. "It hath not been used nor thought meet heretofore, that players have or should make their lyving on the art of playing; but men for their lyving *using other and lawful arts, or retayned in honest services*, have by companies learned some interludes for some in-

crease to their profits, by other men's pleasures, in vacant times of recreation." It has been surmised that the opposition of the city to plays being performed in the inn-yards within its boundaries first brought about the construction of regular theatres. This opposition continued to vent itself in petitions and complaints to the sovereign, setting forth that the great concourse of people the players brought prevented customers from getting to their shops, impeded marriages, burials, &c. In 1600 an order was issued in council to limit the theatres to two, the Fortune and the Globe; but there seems to have been no attempt to carry it out, for in 1616 we find the mayor calling attention to this order, and directing the suppression of the Blackfriars. "There is so great a multitude of coaches," says the document, "whereof many are hackney coaches, bringing people of all sorts that sometimes all the streets cannot contain them." But James, who was always friendly to the players, paid little heed to these puritanical whinings; in 1603 he had given a license to the company of the Globe and Blackfriars, and from that time they called themselves His Majesty's Servants, having been before known as the Servants of the Lord Chamberlain.

The rapidity with which the public profession of actor advanced in estimation and position is noticed in the following passage from the continuation of Stowe's Chronicle - by Howes: "Comedians and

stage players of former times were very poor and ignorant in respect of this time; but being now (1583) growne very skilful and exquisite actors for all matters, they were entertained into the service of divers great lords; out of which companies there were twelve of the best chosen, and, at the request of Sir Francis Walsingham, they were sworne the Queen's servants, and were allowed wages and liveries as grooms of the Queen's chamber: and until this year 1583, the Queen had no players." Most of the actors who died before the rebellion were comparatively wealthy men, and in their wills all are styled "gentlemen." The "King's Players," from the time of James to late in the last century, were allowed four yards of "bastard scarlet cloth for a cloak and a quarter yard of crimson velvet for the cape." In the "Return from Parnassus" two Cambridge students, desirous of taking to the stage, are cheered with: "Be merry, my lads, you have happened upon the most excellent vocation in the world for money: they come north and south to bring it to our playhouses." An old play called "Covent Garden," (1638), gives the following contrasted picture of the strolling and the regular actor:

"*Ralph.* We shall be near the Cockpit and see a play now and then.

"*Dobson.* But tell me, Ralph, are those players, the ragged fellows that were at our house last Christmas, that borrowed the red blanket off my

bed to make their mayor a gown, and had the pot-lid for Guy of Warwick's buckler?

"*Ralph.* No, Dobson, they are men of credit, whose actions are beheld by everyone, and allowed for the most part with commendations. They make no yearly dramatic progress with the anatomy of a sumpter-horse laden with the sweepings of Long Lane in a dead vacation, and purchased at the exchange of their own whole wardrobes. They buy not their ordinaries for the copy of a prologue; nor insinuate themselves into the acquaintance of an admiring Ningle who for his free coming in is at the expense of a tavern supper, and rinses their bawling throats with canary."

The first regular playhouse of which we find any mention, was called "The Theatre," and was situated in Shoreditch. The earliest reference to it is in an old book, date 1576, quoted by Payne Collier in his "Annals of the Stage," "Those who go to Paris Garden, the Bell Savage,* or The Theatre, to behold bear baiting, interludes or fence play, must not account of any pleasant spectacle unless first they pay one penny at the gate, another at the entry of the scaffold, and a third for a quiet standing." This house, which could have been only a very rude wooden erection, seems to have been abandoned as early as 1578. The "Curtain," in Moor Fields, so called from its sign being a

* One of the inns most famous for dramatic performances.

striped curtain, was opened in 1576, and was in use until the commencement of Charles the First's reign. In Shakespeare's time there were seven regular theatres: the Curtain, the Blackfriars (built in 1578 by James Burbadge), the Whitefriars (1580), the Red Bull, St. John's Street, the Cock-pit or Phoenix, Drury Lane, situated in Cock Pit Alley, now known as Pitt Court, not opened until late in James's reign, the Fortune, Golden Lane, built or rebuilt by Alleyn (1599). There were besides—the Globe, opened about 1594, the Swan, the Rose, and the Hope on Bankside (Southwark), the Paris Gardens, a summer theatre on Newington Butts, and the inn-yards in which dramatic performances continued to be given. For those seven theatres there were only six companies; the Blackfriars was a winter house, the Globe a summer, and one company sufficed for the two. The Red Bull and the Fortune seem to have been similar to the Britannia and Grecian of the present day. The performances were of an exaggerated and bombastic description, and were chiefly resorted to by citizens and the humbler classes. Blackfriars was "a private" theatre; that is to say, the performances were given by torchlight, although not at night; it was roofed in, and the pit had seats, which was not the case at the public theatres, which were thatched only over the stage, the audience part being uncovered, and without seats for "the groundlings."

The aristocratic company had also boxes or rooms, of which they kept the keys, and had the privilege of sitting upon the stage. When all the seats were occupied by the ladies, the gentlemen used to lie at their feet, as we see Hamlet lie at Ophelia's, while their pages waited beside them with tobacco to replenish their pipes. Everyone smoked in the old theatres, frequently played cards; while the groundlings drank ale, ate apples, and cracked nuts. The Bankside theatres, except the Globe, were frequented by a very low class, the entertainment being probably a mixed one of singing, dancing, fencing, and buffoonery. The Swan and the Rose were shut up early in James the First's reign.

In regard to the size of these buildings, we read that the stage of the Fortune was forty-three feet wide, and, including a dressing-room at the back, thirty-nine and a half feet deep; it was three stories or tiers high, and from floor to ceiling it was thirty-two feet; the cost of erection was five hundred and fifty pounds. The prices of admission seem to have ranged from a penny to a shilling. But in the Induction to Ben Jonson's "Bartholomew Fair," produced at the Hope in 1614, the Scrivener, in reciting certain articles of agreement says, "it shall be lawful for any man to judge his sixpen'worth, his twelvepen'worth, to his eighteenpence, two shillings, half-a-crown, to the value of

his place." From various allusions in old books, we gather that the play commenced at three,* and that the time of opening was announced by trumpets and flags. "Each playhouse advances his flag in the air, whither quickly at the waving thereof are summoned whole troops of men, women, and children." Besides the play, there was sometimes given "a jig," that is, a number of satirical coarse verses which were recited by the clown, to the accompaniment of pipe and tabor, to which he also danced.

Ophelia. "You are merry, my lord."

Hamlet. "Oh, your only jig-maker!"

There were also songs and dances between the acts, to give time for changes of dress.

The monetary arrangements of the old theatres were very simple. After so much had been deducted for the expenses of the house—those of the Blackfriars were forty-five shillings, for lighting, rent, payment of inferior actors, &c.—the residue was divided into quarter, half or whole shares, by the principals, according to their position. A share and a half at the Blackfriars in 1630 was worth £350, equal to £1,000 of our present money. The average daily takings were from twenty to thirty pounds.

Whether any kind of scenery was used in our

* "All that sing and say

Come to the Town-House and see the play,

At three o'clock it shall begin."—*Histriomastix*, 1610.

ancient theatres is, I think, still a doubtful question; that it was largely and splendidly employed in the entertainments given at Court, we have only to turn to the Masques of Ben Jonson and Shirley to be assured. Many of the descriptions there given of the elaborate changes, effects and coloured lights, read like the accounts of a pantomime of the present day. It seems strange that no such inventions, however far behind the model, should have been introduced into such a theatre as the Blackfriars. Again, if no scenery of any kind was used for his plays in the regular playhouses, why did Shakespeare cumber them with a number of stage directions impossible to be carried out? In the folio edition of *King John*, 1623, we have the direction, "Enter Arthur on the Walls." In *Henry VI.*, "Enter Pucelle on the top of a tower." In *Cymbeline*, "Jupiter descends in thunder and lightning sitting upon an eagle, he throws a thunder-bolt." In Act II., Scene 2, of Jonson's "*The Devil is an Ass*," upon the margin of the old copy was printed, "this scene is acted at two windows, as out of two contiguous buildings." Many other instances of such probable use of scenery may be found. A curtain which opened in the middle, veiled the stage until the performance commenced. When a tragedy was represented the stage was hung with black. Hence the opening line of *Henry VI.*, "Hung

be the heavens with black." It was also strewn with rushes. Malone conjectures that towards the rear there was a balcony, about eight or ten feet from the ground, and probably supported by pillars, from which, in many of our old plays, part of the dialogue was spoken; curtains were hung in front of this balcony. The orchestra was placed above what would now be a stage-box, the instruments were trumpets, cornets, hautboys, lutes, recorders, viols and organs.

Besides the adult actors, there were the Children of St. Paul's (the choristers); those of the Chapel Royal, the Children of the Revels, were still more famous; they were formed into a regular company by Elizabeth; all Lilly's, and several of Jonson's and Shakespeare's plays, were originally performed by these boys, and their great popularity caused much jealousy among the professional actors. "Do they hold the same estimation (the players) they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?" asks Hamlet of Rosencrantz. "There is, Sir," is the reply, "an aïery of children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of the question, and are most tyrannically clapped for't: these are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages (so they call them), that many, wearing rapiers, are afraid of goose quills, and dare scarce come thither." These juveniles attained to great perfection, and several became in after life admirable comedians at

the Blackfrairs. One, Salathiel Pavy, who acted in Jonson's "Poetaster," and "Cynthia's Revels," and who was said to have been inimitable in his representation of old men, died at thirteen, and has been immortalized in the following exquisite verses of the old dramatist :

" Weep with me all that read
This little story !
And know, for whom a tear you shed
Death's self is sorry.
'Twas a child that so did thrive
In grace and feature,
As Heaven and Nature seemed to strive
Which owned the creature.
Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When Fates turn'd cruell :
Yet three filled Zodiacs had he been
The stage's jewell :
And did act, what now we moan,
Old men so duly ;
As, sooth, the PAROE thought him one,
He played so truly.
So, by error to his fate
They all consented ;
But viewing him since, alas ! too late,
They have repented :
And have soughte to give new birth,
In baths to steep him ;
But, being so much too good for earth,
HEAVEN vows to keep him."

Perhaps the most important player in the earlier drama was the clown. As it has been said before,

he was the lineal descendant of the Vice of the old Moralities ; he was introduced into every play, and had unlimited license accorded him ; he came on between the acts and scenes and obtruded himself even upon the action of the play, without any respect to propriety, whenever any new piece of buffoonery struck him. Hence Hamlet's advice to the players : " Let those who play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them : for there be of them, that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too ; though, in the meantime, *some necessary question of the play be then to be considered* : that's villainous, and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

There is no name among the old players more famous than that of Dick Tarleton. " For a wonderful, pleasant extemporal wit, he was the wonder of his tyme ! He was so beloved that men use his picture for their signs," says Howes. Another old author tells us : " For the clown's part he never had his equal." Even Ben Jonson, who never missed an opportunity of having a fling at actors, could not refrain from applauding Tarleton. " The self same words spoken by another would hardly move a man to smile, which uttered by him would force a sad soul to laughter." He is said to have been brought to London from Shropshire by one of Lord Leicester's servants, who found him in the fields

tending his father's swine, and was so astonished by the readiness of his answers and the quickness of his intellect, that he proposed he should enter my lord's service—a proposal Dick was willing enough to embrace. In a little while he was enrolled among the twelve players who formed the Queen's company, and became a kind of court-jester as well. "When the queen was serious," says Fuller, "I dare not say sullen, Tarleton could undumpish her at his pleasure. He told her more of her faults than most of her chaplains, and cured her of her melancholy better than all her physicians." He fell into disgrace at last, however, and was dismissed from Court for scurrilous reflections upon Leicester and Raleigh. He appears to have chiefly played at the Red Bull; in his latter years he kept a tavern in Paternoster Row, and afterwards the Tabor in Gracechurch Street. He died in 1588, and was buried in St. Leonard's, Shoreditch. "He wrote," says Dibdin ("History of the Stage,") "one dramatic piece called 'The Seven Deadly Sins;' and this appears to have been when tired of his debaucheries, he, like Green and Nash, pretended to repent of his irregularities, at which time his wit seems to have dwindled into mere scurrility, for as he grew debilitated with his excesses, he became sour and sarcastic. None escaped his virulence, not even Leicester and Raleigh, till, being discarded from Court, and grow-

ing every day more contemptible in the world's opinion, he died, like Voltaire, a mixture of imbecility, folly and irresolution." His picture forms the frontispiece of a jest book, which bears his name, and which answers Chettle's description of him; "the next, by his suit of russet, his buttoned cap, his taber, his standing on his toe, and other tricks, I know either to be the body or the resemblance of Richard Tarleton, who living, for his pleasant conceits, was of all men liked, and dying, for mirth left not his like." There are many strange stories recorded of his wit and his rogueries, but most of them have been applied to other celebrated jesters. Here is one that much savours of a tale told of Rabelais. Having run up a long score at an inn at Sandwich, and not being able, or not feeling disposed to pay, he made his boy accuse him of being a seminary priest. When the officers came they found him upon his knees crossing himself most devoutly; they paid his reckoning, made him prisoner and carried him off to London. He was taken before Recorder Fleetwood, who knew him well, and laughing heartily at the trick, not only discharged but invited him home to dinner. Another anecdote illustrates what has been before said of the license allowed to the clowns. In a performance of "Henry the Fifth"—not Shakespeare's, but the old play of that name—Tarleton had to double the Chief Justice with the clown, and

the actor who personated Prince Hal gave him a ringing slap upon the face. Soon after the Justice's exit, Tarleton re-entered in his proper character. "Had'st thou been here then," said one of the actors, "thou would'st have seen Prince Henry hit the Judge a terrible box on the ear." "What, strike a judge?" exclaimed the clown, "then it must be very terrible to the judge, since the very report so terrifies me that my cheek burns again with it."

The old rhyme,

"The King of France with forty thousand men,
Went up a hill and then came down again,"

is mentioned in a Tract of 1642 as being one of "Old Tarleton's" songs.

CHAPTER II.

THE ORIGINAL ACTORS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

Shakespeare—Richard Burbadge as an Actor—His Epitaph—Will Kempt and his Adventures—Hemings, Condell and Slye—Alleyn and Dulwich College—The Closing of the Theatres by the Puritans—Persecution of the Players—Robert Cox and his Mummeries—Beginning of the Revival.

THERE is but little record of the actors of this period, except of those who were the originals in Shakespeare's plays. Their names stand thus in the first folio :—

“The names of the principal actors in all these plays.”

“ William Shakspeare,	Samuel Gilburne,
Richard Burbadge,	Robert Armin,
John Hemings,	William Ostler,
Augustine Philips,	Nathan Field,
William Kempt,	John Underwood,
Thomas Poope,	Nicholas Tooley,
George Bryan,	William Ecclestone,
Henry Condell,	Joseph Taylor,
William Slye,	Robert Benfield,
Richard Cowley,	Robert Goughe,
John Lowine,	Richard Robinson,
Samuel Crosse,	John Shancke,
Alexander Cooke,	John Rice.”

Of the first, and mightiest name in the list, little need be said, since it would be useless to enter into a discussion upon Shakespeare's merits as an actor; his contemporaries are silent upon the subject, and we are therefore without any means of judging. That he thoroughly understood the art is proved by his address to the players in "Hamlet;" but that is no proof of his own excellence, since there are many men who, although they are admirable judges of acting and excellent stage-managers, are very inferior performers. We know that he played the Ghost in his own "Hamlet," that he was the original Know'ell in "Every Man in his Humour," and that he was in the first cast of "Sejanus"—and that is all.

The BURBADGES are believed to have sprung from a good Warwickshire family. James Burbadge has already been noticed in the previous chapter as an actor and the builder of the Blackfriars Theatre. The date of Richard's birth is unknown; Payne Collier surmises that he was Shakespeare's junior. He probably went upon the stage when quite a boy as a performer of female characters; and we find him holding a prominent position in his profession previous to 1588. An agreement is still extant between Richard Burbadge and a certain carpenter for the construction of the Globe Theatre. Of the lives of these old actors little is known; there were no anecdote-mongers in those days to pry into the

domesticities of celebrated men, and to make notes of every green-room scandal and tattle, or to write their reminiscences and take posthumous vengeance upon friends and enemies alike. Pleasant it would be for us if there had been such, for then we should have known Shakespeare the man as well as Shakespeare the dramatist. But literature and art were such recent creations that people had not yet learned to comprehend their value, and having little interest themselves in the private affairs of their professors, thought posterity would feel less, or none at all. (Probably their lives were uneventful enough ; most of them appear to have been highly respectable citizens, whose days were absorbed in the study and exercise of their art ; their nights passed in the company of gay gallants who eagerly sought their society, were perhaps a little wild ; but it was an age of life and vigour, when men's veins were filled with hot blood, and not the red stagnant fluid that now does service for it. Burbadge was the first of that noble line of great tragic actors which ended with Macready—for ever, it would seem ; and must have been, according to contemporary testimony, a most consummate master, second to none. All that is known of his biography may be contained in a few words. He was born, and lived, and died, in Holywell, (now the High Street,) or Halliwell Street, as it was then called, Shoreditch. According to one of his epitaphs, " On the death of that great

master in his art and quality, painting and playing," he was doubly an artist; and Payne Collier conjectures that Martin Droeshout's engraving of Shakespeare, in the first folio, was taken from a likeness painted by Burbadge. There is no evidence to support such a supposition, but it is not at all an improbable one. There are many testimonies still extant of the high esteem in which he was held. In the "Return from Parnassus," one of the characters says: "For honour, who of more repute than Dick Burbadge and Will Kempt—he is not accounted a gentleman who does not know Dick Burbadge and Will Kempt." He was universally acknowledged to stand at the head of his profession and to be above rivalry. Wagers were frequently made in those days upon the merits of favourite actors, who were compared one against the other; even the great Alleyn was at times involved in such trials of skill, but never Burbadge; with him it was not believed possible to contest. He died in 1618, some say of the plague, but this line, in an epitaph from which I shall presently quote,

"He (Death) first made seizure of thy wondrous tongue,"

seems to indicate paralysis. In the register of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, we read: "1618. Richard Burbadge, player, was buried the xvijth of March, Halliwell Street." He was the original of the greater number of Shakespeare's heroes—of Corio-

lanus, Brutus, Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, Lear, Shylock, Macbeth, Henry V., Prince Hal, and Richard the Third. Bishop Corbet, in his "Iter Boreale," relating how his host at Leicester described the battle of Bosworth Field, says :

" Besides what of his knowledge he could say,
He had authenticke notice from the play ;
Which I might guess, by's mustering up the ghosts,
And policyes, not incident to hostes ;
But chiefly by that one perspicuous thing,
Where he mistooke a player for a king,
For when he would have sayed, ' King Richard dyed,'
And call'd—' a horse, a horse !'—he, ' Burbidge,'* ' cryed.' "

Here are extracts from a famous elegy which enumerates some of his greatest characters and gives us an excellent idea of his acting :

" He's gone, and with him what a world are dead,
Friends every one, and what a blank instead !
Take him for all in all, he was a man
Not to be match'd, and no age ever can.
No more young Hamlet, though but scant of breath,
Shall cry ' Revenge,' for his dear father's death ;
Poor Romeo never more shall tears beget
For Juliet's love and cruel Capulet :
Harry shall not be seen as king or prince,
They died with thee dear Dick, * * * *
* * * * *
And Crookback, as befits, shall cease to live.
Tyrant Macbeth, with unwash'd bloody hand,
We vainly now may hope to understand.

* It will be noted how differently this and other names are spelt by different authors, but the orthography of proper names was little attended to in our early literature.

Brutus and Marcius henceforth must be dumb,
 For ne'er thy like upon the stage shall come,
 To charm the faculty of ears and eyes, *Handwritten III-2-20*
 Unless we could command the dead to rise.

* * * * *

Heart-broke Philaster, and Aminatas too,
 Are lost for ever; with the red hair'd Jew.*

* * * * *

Thy stature small, but every thought and mood
 Might thoroughly from thy face be understood.
 And his whole action he could change with ease,
 From ancient Leare to youthful Pericles.
 But let me not forget one chiefest part,
 Wherein beyond the rest he moved the heart,
 The griev'd Moor—

* * * * *

All these and many more with him are dead.

* * * * *

England's great Roscius! for what Roscius
 Was to Rome that Burbadge was to us!

How did his speech become him, and his pace *Handwritten II-1-1*
 Suit with his speech, and every action grace,
 Them both alike, while not a word did fall
 Without just weight to ballast it withal.

Had'st thou but spoke with Death, and us'd the power
 Of thy enchanting tongue at that first hour
 Of his assault, he had let fall his dart
 And quite been charm'd with thy all-charming art."

"He was a delightful Proteus," says Flecknoe,†
 "so wholly transforming himself into his part, and
 putting off himself with his clothes, as he never,

* All representatives of Shylocks wore a red wig until Kean
 donned a black, the former colour it would seem, however, has
 the authority of the original.

† In the "Discourses on the English Stage."

(not so much as in the tyring house) assumed himself again until the play was done. * * * * He had all the parts of an excellent actor (animating his words with speaking and speech with action) his auditors being never more delighted than when he spoke, nor more sorry than when he held his peace; yet even then he was an excellent actor still, never failing in his part when he had done speaking; but with his looks and gesture, maintaining it still unto the height." The Queen of James the First died about the same time, but royalty was forgotten in grief for the stage favourite, as it was pointed out by a satiric poet of the time.

" Burbadge, the player, has vouchsafed to die!
Therefore in London is not one eye dry.

* * * * *

Dick Burbadge was their mortal god on earth:
When he expires, lo! all lament the man,
But where's the grief should follow good Queen Anne?"

Tarleton's immediate successor and almost equal in wit was WILL·KEMPE; but he was a legitimate actor as well as a clown, being, it is supposed, the original Dogberry, Peter, Launce, Shallow, Launcelot Gobbo, Touchstone, and the First Gravedigger. In an old pamphlet he is spoken of as "the most comical and conceited cavaleire M. de Kempe, jest-monger and vice-gerent general to the ghost of Dick Tarleton." Heywood, in his "Apology for Actors," says, "To whom (Tarleton) succeeded

Will Kempe, as well in the favour of Her Majesty as in the opinion and good thoughts of the general audience." Nash speaks of him in 1589 as a complete and finished actor, whose fame had extended even beyond the shores of England. But it is thought that Hamlet's diatribe against "gagging" was especially meant for Kempe. Like Tarleton, he did not confine his wit and vagaries to the stage, but frequently practised them out of doors. There is in an old pamphlet, dated 1600, written by him, entitled "Nine Daies Wonder. Performed in a Morris Dance from London to Norwich, containing the pleasures, paines and kinde entertainments of William Kempe between London and that City," &c. On the title-page there is a woodcut representing Kempe, dancing with bells on his legs, wearing a brocaded jacket and scarf, attended by Thomas Sly, another noted actor, as tabourer. It need scarcely be remarked that this strange expedition was undertaken for a wager. A yet more extraordinary feat was performed by him under the same condition—walking backwards to Berwick. Another time he journeyed to France and Rome, dancing all the way it would seem from the following verse :

" He did labour after the tabor,
For to dance ; then into France
He took paines
To skip it.

In hopes of gain
He will trip it
On the toe."

He is made to say in an old comedy,* "I am somewhat hard of study, an like your honour, but if you will invent any extemporal merriment I'll put out the small sacke of wit I ha' left in venture with them." He was held in high estimation by his contemporaries, and his name was frequently coupled even with that of Burbadge. The time of his death is uncertain; according to the "*Biographia Dramatica*" it occurred in 1603, of the plague.

JOHN HEMINGS was another Warwickshire man—how many of the old players came from that part of the country—Hemings was born at Shottery, not far from Stratford, about 1556. Before Elizabeth's death he was one of the principal proprietors of the Globe, and his name is joined with that of Shakespeare and Burbadge in King James's licence of 1603. He is accredited with the honour of being the original Falstaff, and had even the greater honour of being, with Condell, the editor and publisher of the first folio of Shakespeare's plays (1623). According to the following passage, it would appear that he received at least a portion of the manuscript from the author direct: "His mind and hand went

* It was a custom in the old plays to introduce the actors by name into the inductions, and even into the body of the drama, and make them talk about themselves.

together, and what he thought he uttered with that easiness that *we have scarcely received from him a blot in his papers.*" (The italics are my own). Payne Collier thinks that many of the old actors were engaged in business as well as professionally, and remarks that as Hemings was free of the Grocer's Company he might have been a grocer. But in his will he is styled John Hemings, gentleman, which term could scarcely in those days, when the word meant something, and was not applied indiscriminately to a coalheaver and a prince, have been used to describe a tradesman. He died in 1630, and was buried in St. Mary's, Aldermanbury, in which parish he had resided all his life.

CONDELL, his collaborateur in the folio, was also a resident of Aldermanbury, and the owner of property in that parish; he was a man of substance who had shares in the Blackfriars Theatre and kept his country house at Fulham. No particular Shakespearian part has been assigned to him, but he was the original Bobadil, as well as of several of Beaumont and Fletcher's and Webster's great characters. He died in 1627.

WILLIAM SLY, who has been previously mentioned in conjunction with Kempe, was the original Osric. COWLEY was the original Verges; ARMIN succeeded Kempe in the character of Dogberry; LOWIN succeeded Hemings as Falstaff, and was the original

Volpone, Mammon, Bosola, Amintor; he had a share and a half in the Blackfriars, and married a wealthy wife; but, unlike those already mentioned, he lived on into the troublous times of the rebellion, and lost all at the suppression of the theatres. NATHAN FIELD was said to be second only to Burbadge as an actor. He was one of the children of "Her Majesty's Revels," and is in the original cast of Jonson's "Cynthia's Revels." Born in 1587, he was too young to have been an original, at least as an adult, in any of Shakespeare's plays, but he succeeded to Burbadge in several of his great characters, and was especially famous in the Moor.

"Field is in sooth an actor—all men know it,
And is the true Othello of the poet,"

says an old rhymester.

JOSEPH TAYLOR has been accredited by Davies with being the original Hamlet; but even if there was no direct evidence against this assertion, it would be absurd to suppose that Burbadge, in the height of his powers, would have allowed another actor to possess himself of such a character. Taylor was his successor in the part, and might, even during the latter years of "Roscius," have played it when the other was indisposed. He is said to have been the original Iago, but after Burbadge's death, he took Othello.

The little that is known of the remaining actors

enumerated in the folio would scarcely prove interesting reading. They were nearly all men of good position, who left behind at their deaths a very respectable amount of money and landed property. Another celebrated player of this period, EDWARD ALLEYN, has been coupled with Burbadge by Sir Richard Baker as one of two actors "such as no age must ever look to see the like." Among other parts he was the original of Marlowe's "Jew of Malta," and "Tamerlane." In conjunction with Philip Henslowe, he built the "Fortune" and having accumulated considerable wealth, founded, as is well known, Dulwich College for six poor men and women, and twelve children. At first it was intended that the recipients of this bounty should be drawn exclusively from the theatrical profession; but it is said that the refusal of the pensioners to admit among them an old door-keeper of the theatre, so disgusted the founder that he at once changed the nature of the bequest. Since 1857 this charity has been entirely reconstituted. The revenue left by Alleyn was £600 a year, it is now £17,000. His excellences as an actor have been set forth by Jonson, who, comparing him with Roscius and Æsopus of Rome, says :

"Who both their graces in thyself hast more
Outstript, than they did all who went before;
And present worth in all dost so contract,
As others speak but only thou dost act.

Wear this renown. 'Tis just that who did give
So many poets life, by one should live."

Heywood, in one of the prologues to the "Jew of Malta" speaks of him as—

"Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue."

There never was such a general passion for dramatic entertainments as at this period; the art was thoroughly studied and understood, as how could it be otherwise under the reign of such dramatists as Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Shakespeare?* The actors lived in their fine old substantial city houses, or in grand country manors, such as Edward Alleyn inhabited at Dulwich, esteemed and sought after by the best people, and if commonly prudent died rich and honoured. Their worst enemy was the plague; while it raged, and that was pretty frequently, all theatres were closed, and they had to migrate into the country, which was not profitable.

But as Puritanism advanced, the prosperity of the theatrical profession began to decline. In 1622 there were but four principal companies—the King's,

* Boys were regularly apprenticed to the profession. Each principal was entitled to have a boy or apprentice, who played the young and the female characters, and for whose services he received a certain sum. We find in Henslowe's accounts an item for buying the services of one for eight pounds. Thus trained under great masters it is not to be wondered at that they grew up to be such consummate masters of their art.

which acted at the Blackfriars, and the Globe, the Prince's at the Curtain, the Palgrave's at the Fortune, the Queen of Bohemia's at the Cockpit. 1629 was the first year in which a female performer was seen in the English Theatre. The innovation was introduced by a French company, but the women were hissed and pippin-pelted off the stage. This was at the new theatre just opened in Salisbury Court. Three weeks afterwards they made a second attempt, but the audience would not tolerate them. King Charles and his Queen had a great love for dramatic entertainments, the latter frequently took part in the Court Masques, which brought down upon her the brutal language of that canting fellow Prynne. Yet in 1635 Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, under whose jurisdiction all theatrical affairs were then placed, mentions only the King's company under Lowin and Taylor at Blackfriars, the Queen's under Beeston at the Cockpit, the Prince's under Moore and Kane at the Fortune; in the next year he adds a fourth, doubtless Salisbury Court, to the list, which house was probably closed on the previous date.

On the 6th of September, 1642, the theatres were closed by ordinance, it being considered not seemly to indulge in any kind of diversions or amusements in such troublous times. In 1647, another and more imperative order was issued, in consequence of certain infractions of the previous one, threatening to

imprison and punish as rogues all who broke its enactments. Close upon the heels of this second came a third, which declared all players to be rogues and vagabonds, and authorised the justices of the peace to demolish all stage galleries and seats ; any actor discovered in the exercise of his vocation should for the first offence be whipped, for the second be treated as an incorrigible rogue, and every person found witnessing the performance of a stage play should be fined five shillings. Verily, the reign of Praise-God-Barebones had commenced. But not even these stringent regulations were found sufficient, and in the next year a Provost Marshal was appointed, whose duty it was to seize all ballad singers and suppress all stage-plays. It is mentioned in Whitelocke's Memorials, that on the 20th of December, 1649, some stage players were seized by troopers at the Red Bull, their clothes taken away and themselves carried off to prison. What a change from the palmy days of Elizabeth and James ! Happy were those who had passed away. The following, from Davies' "*Miscellanies*," is a striking picture of the condition of actors at this time :

"When the civil wars shut the doors of the theatres, many of the comedians, who had youth, spirit, and vigour of body, took up arms in defence of their royal master. When they could no longer serve him by the profession of acting, they boldly vindicated his cause in the field. Those who were

too far advanced in age to give martial proofs of their royalty, were reduced to the alternative of starving, or engaging in some employment to support their wants. * * * During the first years of the unnatural contest between King and Parliament, the players were not unwelcome guests to those towns and cities which espoused the royal cause; but in London, where bigotry and opposition to the King were triumphant, they experienced nothing but persecution. A few of the nobility, indeed, who loved the amusements of the stage, encouraged the players to act in their houses privately; but the watchful eyes of furious zealots prevented all public exhibitions, except, as the author of "*Historia Histrionica*" asserts, now and then such as were given with great caution and privacy. Sometime before the beheading of the unhappy Charles, a company of comedians was formed out of the wreck of several, who played at the Cockpit three or four times; but while they were acting Fletcher's "*Bloody Brother*," the soldiers rushing in, put an end to the play, and carried the actors to Hatton House, at that time a sort of prison for royal delinquents; where they were confined two or three days, and, after being stripped of their stage apparel, were discharged. * * * Much, about this time, Lowin kept the Three Pigeons at Brentford, where he was attended by Joseph Taylor. Here they lingered out an uncomfortable existence, with scarce any

other means of support than those which they obtained from the friends of royalty, and the old lovers of the drama, who now and then paid them a visit and left them marks of their bounty. Upon these occasions Lowin and Taylor gave their visitors a taste of their quality. The first roused up the spirit and humour of Falstaff. Again the fat old rogue swore that he knew the Prince and Poinas as well as he that made them. Hamlet, too, raised the visionary terrors of the ghost, and filled his select auditors with terror and amazement. To entertain their guests we must suppose they assumed various personages, and alternately excited merriment and grief. How often were those honest fellows surprised into a belief of the good news that the King and Parliament had come to treaty, that peace would be restored, and the King return to his capital in triumph. How would their countenances then be lighted up with joy, the glass cheerfully circulate, and the meeting be dismissed with: "The King shall have his own again." Their honest friend and associate, Goff, the actor of women's parts at Blackfriars and the Globe, was the usual Jackall to summon the scattered comedians together, that they might exhibit at Holland House, or some nobleman's seat, within a few miles of the capital."

But not even "the saints" were immaculate; one Robert Cox found means to bribe the officers

appointed to look after such affairs, and gave short interludes and "drolls" at the Red Bull to crowded houses, under the guise of a rope-dancing entertainment. It was vile buffoonery, and could scarcely be dignified by the title of a dramatic performance, and was therefore more likely to be tolerated by their saintships than the noble productions of Shakespeare and Beaumont; and therein they are closely followed by the Mawworms of the present day, who grin at the dreary and doubtful jokes of a circus clown, and gaze approvingly at the lightly skirted young ladies with one toe on the bare-backed steed and the other in a horizontal line, but would consider it sinful to listen to the noble wit of Touchstone, and highly indelicate to look upon Rosalind in her forester's dress. With a company consisting only of himself, a man, and a boy, Robert Cox contrived, in spite of ordinances, to travel all over the country, to perform at the Universities—which, for want of better things, eagerly welcomed his—and to make a large fortune by his mummeries.

But even the partisans of the Commonwealth were beginning to grow a little weary of the Cimmerian gloom and intellectual paralysis in which they lived, and having obtained the countenance of Whitelocke, Sir John Maynard, and other persons of distinction, Davenant, in 1656, opened a sort of theatre at Rutland House, Charterhouse Yard,

where he began with the representation of what he called an opera ("The Siege of Rhodes"). This was followed by other works of a similar kind. In 1658, he went a step farther, and opened the Cockpit with a performance he described as "The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru, expressed by instrumental and vocal music, and by the art of perspective in scenes, at the Cockpit in Drury Lane, at three in the afternoon." We see he carefully avoided the word "play," that red rag of bull-headed fanaticism. It is said that Cromwell's hatred of the Spaniards, who in this piece were held up to execration, had much to do with my Lord Protector giving his consent.

Two years afterwards came the Restoration, and a new order of things dramatic.

Part II.

THE ACTORS OF THE RESTORATION
AND THE BETTERTON SCHOOL.

CHAPTER I.

THE ACTORS OF THE RESTORATION.

Killigrew's and Davenant's Patent—Articles of Agreement—Copy of the First Drury Lane Playbill—Killigrew's Company—Hart—Anecdotes of Joe Haines—The First English Actress—Nell Gwynne—Anecdotes—Sir William Davenant.

SEVERAL months before the Restoration, towards the end of 1659, theatres began to revive, and plays were openly performed at the Red Bull. The actors lost no time after "the King had got his own again," and Rhodes, formerly prompter at the Blackfriars, who had turned bookseller during the troublous times, waited upon Monk, while he was encamped in Hyde Park, and obtained permission from him to open the Cockpit in Drury Lane. Before the end of June, Beeston had opened the theatre in Salisbury Court, and the Red Bull company had fitted up a tennis court in Vere Street, Clare Market, for dramatic representations. All the old theatres were about to pass away. Neither Blackfriars nor the Globe was used after 1647. The Fortune, which had been once

burned down and rebuilt, was abandoned in 1661; the Cockpit and the Red Bull survived two years longer; the house in Dorset Gardens had been destroyed in 1649.

In August, 1660, the King granted to Thomas Killigrew, a groom of the Chamber, and to Sir William Davenant leave to erect two new theatres—one in Drury Lane, the other in Salisbury Court—and the sole privilege of dramatic representations in London and Westminster. The Company of the first was to be called the King's, that of the second the Duke of York's. The articles of agreement between Davenant and his actors give us a complete picture of the theatrical management of the period.

"It is agreed that the general receipts of money of the said playhouse shall—after the house-rent and hirelings [supers and inferior actors] and all other and necessary expenses of that kind be defrayed—be divided into fourteen proportions or shares, whereof the same William Davenant shall have four full proportions or shares to his own use, and the rest to the use of the company. It is further stipulated that the said company shall admit such a consort of musicians into the said playhouse for their necessary use, as the said Sir William shall nominate and provide, during their playing in the said playhouse, not exceeding the rate of thirty shillings a day, to be defrayed out of the general expenses of the house before the said four-

teen shares be divided." It was further agreed that upon the opening of the new theatre in Salisbury Court, the proceeds should be divided into fifteen shares—two to be paid Sir William towards house-rent, building, scaffolding, and the making of frames for scenes, and a third was to be deducted for habits, properties and scenery. Out of the remaining twelve he was also to receive seven, "to maintain all women that are to represent women's parts, and in consideration of erecting and establishing these to be a company, and his, the said Sir William's pains and expenses to that purpose for many years." He was to appoint half the door-keepers, the wardrobe-keeper and barber—at the public expense. There is another stipulation which remained in force in all theatres until recent years, and is still insisted upon in the inferior provincial houses, that the management shall not provide the actors with hats, feathers, gloves, ribbons, swords, belts, bands, shoes and stockings. The old stock plays of Shakespeare and other pre-Restoration authors were equally divided between the two houses and each had its particular dramatists to write new ones.

The two patents granted by Charles brought about another revolution in stage affairs, by taking their direction out of the hands of the Master of the Revels, who had hitherto been omnipotent over them, and had derived considerable emoluments

from their direction. Sir Henry Herbert, who still held the office, made a struggle to preserve his privileges, and forbade both companies to play without his authority, or without paying the customary fees. It need scarcely be said that this defiance of the royal patent came to nothing.

For his new theatre in Drury Lane, Killigrew bought a piece of ground called the Riding Yard, for which he was to pay £50 a year; the present building stands upon the same site; the erection cost £1500; it was one hundred and twelve feet from east to west, and fifty-nine from north to south. Its existence was a brief one; it was burnt down nine years after it was opened, in 1671. Here is a facsimile of the play bill of the opening night.

“ BY HIS MAJESTY’S COMPANY OF COMEDIANS,

At the New Theatre in Drury Lane,

This day being Thursday, April 8th, 1663,

Will be acted

A Comedy call’d

THE HUMOVROVS LIEVTENANT.

The King	.	.	.	.	Mr. Wintersel
Demetrius	.	.	.	.	Mr. Hart
Selevius	.	.	.	.	Mr. Byrt
Leontius	.	.	.	.	Major Mohun
Lieutenant	.	.	.	.	Mr. Clvn
Celia	.	.	.	.	Mrs. Marshall.

This play will begin at three o’clock exactly.

Boxes 4s.; Pit 2s. 6d.; Middle Gallery 1s. 6d.;
and Upper Gallery 1s.

It was under Killigrew that the veterans of the stage enrolled themselves. Here were to be found those who remained of the actors of Charles the First's time, most of whom had fought and bled for their royal master. The gentlemen of this company were entered as members of the royal household, provided with a livery of scarlet and silver, and were styled "Gentlemen of the Great Chamber." Cibber does not know whether the same distinction was bestowed upon the Duke's company; but both were great favourites with the public, and considered of so much importance by the Court, that their government, and even their private differences and complaints, were personally decided and ruled by the King and his brother.

Let us begin by briefly describing the principal members of the King's company. BURT, an excellent tragic actor, had been a cornet of cavalry during the Rebellion. MOHUN had been a major in the royal army, and always went by that title in the bills; he was a very fine performer, second only to Hart, and esteemed by King Charles even above him, with whom he sustained the opposite parts in tragedy. "Thou little man of mettle," cried Lee, the dramatist, after seeing him play Mithridates, "if I should write a hundred plays, I would write a part for thy mouth." CLUN was a famous Iago; he was murdered one night, in 1664,

in Kentish Town Road, then a lonely country track, while on his way to his country house at Highgate. LACY is better known than any of these, from his portrait in three of his principal characters, painted by order of Charles II., and still to be seen at Hampton Court. Pepys describes his Teague in "The Committee" as "beyond imagination." He was also a great Falstaff; was the original Bayes of Buckingham's "Rehearsal," in which he made a wonderful hit by mimicking Dryden. In Sir Robert Howard's "Silent Woman," he ventured to be sarcastic upon the Court, and was locked up for the offence; and a quarrel between him and Sir Robert upon the subject caused the theatre to be closed for a short time. Lacy, however, was by and by restored to favour, and continued to enjoy it until his death in 1681. CARTWRIGHT was another notable Falstaff. "Scum" GOODMAN, a disgrace to the profession, who has been recently revived in Mr. Tom Taylor's "Clancarty," was a good actor; he was one of the Duchess of Cleveland's favoured lovers, and attempted to poison two of her children; he robbed on the highway, was mixed up in the Fenwick plot, and turned informer; of the end of this scoundrel nothing is known. HARRIS is frequently mentioned by Pepys; he at first belonged to Davenant's company, but the old playgoer tells us that, he grew proud and demanded

for himself more than anybody else, in consequence of "the King and everybody else crying him up so high, and that above Betterton, he being a more ayery man, as he is indeed." When Pepys entertained him at his house, he found him "a very curious and understanding person in all things, and a man of fine conversation." He was an intimate friend of Pepys; we read of his dining with him and being conveyed to the theatre in his coach.

HART, who was Shakespeare's grand-nephew, his father being the eldest son of the poet's sister, was one of the most famous actors that ever trod the stage. Before the Rebellion he played women's parts; upon the closing of the theatres he took up arms for the King, and was given a troop of horse. He was the original of Lee's Alexander the Great, and it was said by a nobleman that his action in that character was so excellent that no prince in Europe might have been ashamed to learn deportment from him. Rochester called him the Roscius, Mohun the Æsopus of the stage. "Were I a poet, nay, a Fletcher, a Shakespeare," says a writer, enthusiastically, "I would quit my own title to immortality, so that one actor might never die. This I may modestly say of him, nor is it my own particular opinion, but the sense of all mankind, that the best tragedies on the English stage have received their lustre from Mr. Hart's performance." "In the most wretched of characters," says Rymer,

"he gives a lustre and brilliance which dazzle the sight, that the shortcomings in the poetry cannot be perceived." When he appeared in his great parts, Arbaces ("King and No King") Amintor, Othello, Rollo ("Bloody Brother,") Brutus, Alexander, the theatre was always crammed. He was equally fine in comedy. "In all comedies and tragedies," remarks another writer of the age, "he was concerned in, he performed with that exactness and perfection that not any of his successors have equalled him." "Mrs. Knipp tells me," writes Pepys, "that my Lady Castlemaine is mightily in love with Hart of their house ; and he is much with her in private, and she goes to him and do give him many presents." Hart's salary never exceeded £3 a week ; but when he became a sharer he realised a thousand a year, a very fine income in those days. Upon his retirement in 1682 he was allowed forty shillings a week, but he died in the following year.

JOE HAINES was an excellent comic actor, a wit and a practical jester, whose society was sought by the best people of the time. He was a scholar, had been educated at Oxford, and had been Latin Secretary to Sir Joseph Williamson before he took to the stage. There are enough good stories told of his impudent and mischievous disposition to fill a small volume. Once he served Hart a cruel trick. The great tragedian rather arbitrarily insisted upon his going on one night for a senator in "Catiline,"

although his position in the theatre, and his salary being fifty shillings a week, exempted him from such service. Joe resolved to be revenged; he put on a Scaramouch's dress, a large ruff, huge whiskers and a Merry Andrew's cap, and thus attired, with a short pipe in his mouth and a three-legged stool in his hand, followed Catiline on to the stage. Hart was always so absorbed in the part he was acting, that he had no eyes or ears for anything else, and, no matter what occurred, would never suffer his attention to be for a moment distracted. When Joe entered, seated himself upon his stool, and began laughing and grinning behind the tragedian's back, the house was in a roar; but although he wondered what was amiss, he went on acting, without once turning his head, until a movement in the part revealed to him the ludicrous scene. Haines was immediately turned out of the theatre. Soon afterwards he met with a naval chaplain who was seeking a living, and succeeded in persuading the credulous parson that he could procure him the appointment of chaplain of the theatre, with a handsome salary. All he would have to do would be to summon the company to prayers every morning by ringing a bell and repeating the formula, "Players, players, come to prayers!" "But," he added, "there's a terrible man there, named Hart, who will rush out and abuse you; but take no notice of him, he's either mad or an

atheist." The next morning he introduced the clergyman behind the scenes, placed a bell in his hand, and disappeared to watch the joke. The victim began ringing his bell and shouting in a very sonorous voice, "Players, players, come to prayers!" and all the company gathered round, highly amused, thinking he was insane, until Hart succeeded in obtaining an explanation. Upon which he very quickly opened his eyes to the trick that had been put upon his credulity, and, very indignant himself at it, invited the chaplain to dine with him. But this jest might have had serious consequences for the inventor, had not his ready wit been equal to any occasion; for the victim had a choleric son, who sought him out and insisted upon his fighting upon the spot. "Give me only a few minutes to pray," said Haines, "and I am at your service." Upon which he fell upon his knees and supplicated in a loud voice for pardon for having previously killed seventeen men in duels, and for the eighteenth he was about to add to their number, which so cooled the challenger's courage that he took to his heels. Once, when Joe was arrested in the street for debt, he saw the Bishop of Ely's carriage coming along. Struck by an audacious idea, he said to the bailiffs, "That is my cousin, and if you will let me speak to him he will settle your demands." The bailiffs assented. Joe stopped the carriage, and, hat in hand, thrust his head through the window. "My

lord," he said, in a tone of great emotion, "here are two poor Catholic fellows who are so troubled by doubts and scruples of conscience that I'm afraid they'll hang themselves." "Come to me to-morrow morning and I'll satisfy you," said the bishop, addressing the bailiffs. Joe went free, and next morning the two men waited upon his lordship. "Now, what are these scruples of conscience you have?" inquired the bishop. "Please, your lordship, we have no scruples of conscience," answered one of the fellows, "we are bailiffs, who yesterday arrested your cousin, Joe Haines, for £20, and you said you would satisfy us." And the bishop thought it best to do so. In James II's reign Joe pretended to be a convert to the Catholic faith, and declared that the Virgin had appeared to him. Lord Sunderland sent for him, and asked him if this was really true. "Yes, my lord," replied Haines, "I assure you 'tis a fact." "How was it, pray?" inquired my lord. "Why, as I was lying in my bed, the Virgin appeared to me and said, 'Arise, Joe!'" "You lie, you rogue," retorted Sunderland, "for if it had been the Virgin herself, she would have said Joseph, if it had only been out of respect for her husband." After the Revolution he appeared upon the stage in a white sheet, with a taper in his hand, and delivered some doggerel rhymes in sign of recantation. He died in 1701.

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In 1629, as I have recorded in a previous page, theatre-goers were so shocked by the appearance of women upon the public stage, that they hissed and pelted them off. In Davenant's patent, issued thirty-one years afterwards, occurs this clause: "Whereas the women's parts in plays have hitherto been acted by men, at which some have taken offence, we do permit and give leave for the time to come that all women's parts be acted by women." What a change in public opinion in so short a period! Yet boys continued to share in the performance of female characters for some years after the Restoration. In 1672, "Philaster" and other pieces were acted at the theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields entirely by women, and Dryden wrote two very indecent prologues for the occasion. Desdemona was the first English part sustained by a lady, and that important event in stage history took place on the 8th of December, 1660, at the Red Bull. A prologue, still extant, was written by one Thomas Jordan for the occasion, and entitled, "A Prologue to introduce the first woman that came to act on the stage, in the tragedy called 'The Moor of Venice.'" The half-apologetic tone of the composition shows the experiment was approached with some misgivings. How it was received on that occasion has not been recorded, neither do we know the name of the person who had the honour to be the mother of the English stage. It lies between Mrs. Sanderson,

Mrs. Hughes, and the Marshalls. Pepys notes the 3rd of January, 1661, as the first time he ever saw women upon the stage, it was in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Beggar's Bush;" this must have been in the Vere Street Theatre. Killigrew stole a march upon Davenant, and introduced female performers first. MRS. KNIPP is a name familiar to all readers of Pepys' Diary; the old gossip dilates with great unction upon her loveliness and talents, and her excellent singing of his song "Beauty Retire." Killigrew told him: "Knipp is like to make the best actor that ever came upon the stage; she understanding so well, that they are going to give her £30 a year more." ANNE and "BECK" MARSHALL were the daughters of Stephen Marshall, a noted Presbyterian. Pepys speaks of Beck's fine acting in Massinger's "Virgin Martyr." Both sisters were very beautiful women; Anne was the finer actress.

Of all Eve's frail daughters none have been regarded with more tenderness than NELL GWYNNE. A house is shown at Hereford as her birthplace; but the scene of that event, which took place in 1650, was more probably the Coal Yard, Drury Lane, a thoroughfare still existing. Her early life was degraded enough, as a certain passage in Pepys proves. When little more than a child she sold oranges in the pit of the theatre, and her ready wit and powers of fascination rendered her a great favourite with the gallants of the playhouse, a crowd of whom

would usually be gathered about her. By and bye Hart, thinking her attractions might be turned to good account upon the stage, took her as a pupil, and instructed her in acting. She made her first appearance at Drury Lane, in 1665, in Dryden's "Indian Emperor," being then about fifteen years of age. It is in that year Pepys first mentions her as "pretty, witty Nell, at the King's House." In 1666 he writes, "Knipp took us all in (to a box at the theatre) and brought to us Nelly a most pretty woman, who acted the great part, Celia, to-day (in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Humorous Lieutenant") very fine, and did it very well. I kissed her and so did my wife; and a mighty pretty soul she is." In the next year he sees her play in Dryden's "Maiden Queen," and falls into great raptures. "There is a comical part done by Nell, which is Florimal, that I never can hope ever to see the like done again by man or woman. The King and the Duke of York were at the play. But so great a performance of a comical part was never, I believe, in the world before as Nell do this, both as a mad girl, then most and best of all when she comes like a young gallant, and hath the motions and carriage of a spark the most that ever I saw any man have. It makes me, I confess, admire her." In person she was below the middle height, with very small feet; she was not beautiful, her eyes being very small and they became almost invisible when she laughed, but the vivacity

of her features made amends for other shortcomings. She was never a great actress ; but was airy, fantastic, sprightly, sang and danced, and was admirably adapted for the lighter parts. She left the stage for a time in 1667, and was seen by Pepys in company with Lord Buckhurst at Epsom. " Poor girl," he says, " I pity her. But more the loss of her at the King's house." In the same year he notes her return. " With my Lord Brouncker and his mistress to the King's playhouse, and there saw 'The Indian Emperour,' where I find Nell come again, which I am glad of ; but was most infinitely displeased with her being put to act the Emperour's daughter, which is a great and serious part, which she does most basely." Nelly could never play tragedy. In another entry, made soon after, he tells us that Nell had been left by Lord Buckhurst, and that he was making sport of her, and swearing she had had all she could get of him ; and " Hart, her great admirer, now hates her, and that she is very poor, and hath lost my Lady Castlemaine, who was her great friend also ; but she is come to the playhouse, but is neglected by them all." According to Curll, it was in speaking the Epilogue to Dryden's " Tyrannic Love " (1669), that she first captivated the King ; and so strong was the impression she made upon him, that when the curtain fell, he went behind the scenes and carried her off there and then. It is one of Dryden's wittiest efforts, and so appropriate

to the speaker, that I transcribe the personal lines. As Valeria, she had stabbed herself at the end of the play, and the stage-keeper was about to carry her off, when up she sprang with

“ Hold ! are you mad ? You d——d confounded dog !
I am to rise, and speak the epilogue.”

Then, to the audience :

“ I come, kind gentlemen, strange news to tell ye,
I am the ghost of poor, departed Nelly.
Sweet ladies, be not frightened, I'll be civil,
I'm what I was, a little, harmless devil.

* * * *

“ To tell you true, I walk because I die
Out of my calling in a tragedy.
Oh poet, d——d dull poet, who could prove
So senseless to make Nelly die of love !

* * * *

“ As for my epitaph, when I am gone,
I'll trust no poet, but will write my own :
' Here Nelly lies, although she liv'd a slattern,
Yet died a princess, acting in St. Catherin'.”

In the prologue to another of Dryden's plays, “ *Almanzor and Almahide*,” she appeared in a straw hat, as large round as a cart-wheel, which almost entirely hid her. It was in ridicule of a piece at the other house. This seems to have been her last appearance upon the stage. Her wit and talent for mimicry, which were exercised upon every person of the court, pleased the King hugely ; she held her empire over him to the last, and was

never unfaithful to him, not even after his death. There is a capital story told of her and Mademoiselle Querouaille (the Duchess of Portsmouth). This lady pretended that she was related to all the great families of France, and never omitted to put on mourning at the demise of any member of the French aristocracy. Once, about the same time, a French prince and the Cham of Tartary died. Mademoiselle Querouaille donned her mourning as usual, and, on this occasion, so did Nelly. She was asked for whom she had put on black. "For the Cham of Tartary," she answered. "What relation was he to you?" was the laughing question. "The same that the prince was to Mademoiselle Querouaille," she retorted. She died in 1687, being only thirty-eight years of age. All her life she had been most charitable; of all the King's mistresses she had been the only popular one; the mob never attacked her as they did the others, and her name was usually, if not always, excepted from the lampoons and invectives so freely cast upon the others.

The King took a mistress from the Duke's house under circumstances very similar to those just related—Mary or "MOLL" DAVIES, who was supposed to have been a natural daughter of the Earl of Berkshire. She was more celebrated as a dancer than as an actress. "Little Miss Davies," writes Pepys (1666), "did dance a jig after the end of the play, and there telling the next day's play: so

that it came in by force only to please the company, to see her dance in boy's clothes ; and the truth is, there is no comparison between Nell's dancing the other day at the King's House in boy's clothes and this, this being infinitely beyond the other."

" Who would not think to see thee dance so light,
Thou wert all air, or else all soul and spirit,"

wrote Richard Flecknoe.

She was equally charming as a singer ; and it is said that she owed her disgraceful elevation to her beautiful singing of the old ballad, "My Lodging is on the Cold Ground," and of another commencing :

" I'll crown thee with a garland of straw then,
And marry thee with a rush ring."

Fascinating the King by these ditties, as Nell Gwynne had done by her witty Epilogue. Her daughter, Mary Tudor, married the second Earl of Derwentwater. In the same company was the beautiful MRS. DAVENPORT, of whom a romantic story is told in the Grammont Memoirs. A woman of unblemished virtue, she was, after most desperate importunities of another kind, entrapped into a sham marriage with the Earl of Oxford, who, after the honeymoon, brutally told her that the ceremony had been performed by his trumpeter, and was no marriage at all. Half distracted, she sought the King, threw herself at his feet, and

demanded justice. But the only reparation she could obtain was an annuity of three hundred a year, upon which she retired from the stage.

DAVENANT, the manager of the Duke's company, was said to have been Shakespeare's natural son; his mother, a very beautiful woman, kept the Crown Inn at Oxford, where the great poet was accustomed to sleep when journeying between London and Stratford. William was in his boyhood a page to several noble personages; in his youth he wrote plays and verses; was made Laureate after Jonson's death; served in the civil wars, under the Marquis of Newcastle, as General of Ordnance, and conducted himself so bravely that he was knighted by that nobleman; he was afterwards taken prisoner, and he would have been executed but for the intercession of two gentlemen (it has been said of Milton), to whom he had shown great kindness when they were in a similar strait. We now find him closing his adventurous career as a theatrical patentee. He was the first who commenced the barbarous alterations and mutilations of Shakespeare, to better suit the corrupt and gallicised taste of the Court.

The great actors of this company, as their career extended far beyond the period defined by this chapter, I shall reserve for a separate one.

CHAPTER II.

BETTERTON AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

Rivalry—Degradation of the Stage—The Patent bought for £80—Thomas Betterton—His Style of Acting—His high Position—His Last Appearance—A Good Story—Will Mountfort—His Tragical Fate—Kynaston, the Famous Boy Actress—Smith—A Famous Heavy Villain—Verbruggen—Nokes—Leigh—Cave Underhil—Dick Estcourt—Pictures and Anecdotes of their Acting.

DAVENANT removed his company from Salisbury Court to Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1661, and there, according to general authorities, introduced scenery and decorations for the first time upon the English stage.

This theatre was soon found to be too small, and a new one was commenced in Dorset Gardens. It was not opened, however, until 1671, after its projector's death. As might be expected, there was a strong rivalry between the two houses. The elaborate spectacles, which were a special feature of Dorset Gardens, were frequently ridiculed at Drury Lane; Dryden attacks them in a prologue written for the opening of the new theatre, after the fire,

"You who each day can theatres behold,
Like Nero's palace shining all with gold,
Our mean ungilded stage will scorn, we fear,
And for the homely room disdain the cheer."

Long deprivation of theatrical amusements made the people eagerly flock to them upon their revival, and for some years both companies were exceptionally prosperous; but Drury Lane had the finer actors, especially after Kynaston and several others seceded from Lincoln's Inn; and when the novelty began to wear off, this superiority told against Davenant, who was then obliged to resort to sceptic displays and music, to expensive dresses and decorations, to add a new attraction. Both after a time began to suffer so much from a most contemptible rivalry, that they were driven to petition the King to suppress it—this was no more than a peep-show in Salisbury Change!

Wright in his "*Historia Histrionica*" complains that plays could not draw an audience without foreigners being called in. Betterton had to bring dancers and singers from France and Italy in 1704. When he opened the great theatre in the Haymarket in 1709, a posture master performed between the acts of *Othello*.*

To all these evils were added dissatisfaction and insubordination within the Commonwealth. Hart and Mohun were growing old, and younger actors

* In 1717 Rich paid a German £10 a night for two dogs who danced a minuet between the acts; the other house was deserted. In 1758 Signor Grimaldi, the father of Joe, was announced to make his first appearance at Drury Lane in a new pantomimic dance called "*The Millers*," at the end of the first act of "*Richard III.*" Our ancestors, at all events, were not very strict in their ideas of artistic unities.

were impatient to take their places. At length in consequence of these disagreements, and the great falling off in the audiences, the King commanded the two companies to amalgamate (1682) at Drury Lane.* This union was so much in favour of the Duke's people that Hart quitted the stage in disgust. Mohun died soon afterwards, and thus left the aspirants a clear field. Upon the death of Sir William Davenant the patent went into the hands of his son, Charles, who transferred it to his brother, Alexander. In 1690 it fell into the possession of one Christopher Rich, a lawyer, who bought it for £80, and divided it into shares.† The profits were divided into twenty parts, ten for the proprietors, and ten divided and subdivided among the principal performers. The proprietors sold their shares to speculators, men utterly ignorant of stage affairs, but who were thus admitted to a vote in their management.

Cibber describes Rich as being "as sly a tyrant as ever was at the head of a theatre; for he gave the actors more liberty, and fewer days' pay than any of his predecessors: he would laugh with them over a bottle, and bite them in their bargains; he kept them poor that they might not be able to rebel, and sometimes merry that they might not

* The Theatre in Dorset Gardens, however, was still occasionally used for plays that required elaborate machinery. It was pulled down early in the following century.

† See Appendix A.

think of it—all their articles of agreement had a clause in them that he was sure to creep out at.”

A republic so constituted was not likely to thrive; public support fell off, the expenditure was greater than were the receipts, and a large debt was contracted; as an effort to stimulate the languid taste of the public, showy spectacles and dramatic operas were produced, and large sums paid to singers and dancers. There were murmurings and discontent among the old actors, whose salaries were not only reduced, but very irregularly paid, and, to add to their sense of wrong, young and inferior performers were at times put over their heads. At length Betterton, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Barry, and several others of the principals waited upon King William and obtained permission to build a new theatre in the Tennis Court in Portugal Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields, to which they removed in 1695.

Before proceeding further with the History of the Stage, I must describe the principal actors who formed the amalgamated company in 1690, and place before the reader a few of those inimitable pen and ink sketches which Colley Cibber has, in his “Apology,” bequeathed to us of his contemporaries. Let me commence with the greatest name—THOMAS BETTERTON.

This noble actor was born in Tothill Street, Westminster, in 1635; his father was under-cook to the King. Being of a studious disposition, he

was apprenticed to Rhodes, the bookseller, who had been wardrobe-keeper at the Blackfriars Theatre in Charles the First's time, and who, as we have seen, was the first to obtain a theatrical license after the suppression of the theatres. Upon which young Betterton, fired perhaps by the old man's stories of the past glories of the stage, joined his company, and from the first displayed dramatic talent of a very high order. In 1662 Davenant engaged Rhodes' entire company. Betterton soon became a great favourite of the King's, and Charles sent him over to Paris to observe the working of the French theatres, and to adopt any improvements he might see there. In 1663 he married Mrs. Sander-son. When the pastoral of "Calista, or the Chaste Nymph," was represented at Court by the nobility, he was employed to instruct the gentlemen, while his wife was selected to tutor the Duke of York's daughters, Mary and Anne, in their parts. In memory of which the last named lady, when she became Queen, settled £100 a year upon Mrs. Betterton.

Pepys, seeing him as early as 1661 in Beaumont and Fletcher's "Bondman," calls him "the best actor in the world." "Such an actor," says Isaac Bickerstaff ("Tatler," No. 167), "as Mr. Betterton, ought to be recorded with the same respect as Roscius among the Romans I have hardly a notion that any performer of antiquity

could surpass the action of Mr. Betterton in any of the occasions in which he has appeared upon the stage." In the same paper there is a fine criticism upon his Othello, well worth reading. Hart, however, was perhaps superior to him in the "Noble Moor;" but as Hamlet, all authorities combine in pronouncing him to have been unapproachable; he was instructed in the part by Davenant, who had frequently seen it performed by Taylor, Burbadge's successor. Among Cibber's fine pictures of this actor's performance is one of the Ghost scene, "which," he says, "he opened with a pause of mute amazement; then rising slowly, to a solemn trembling voice, he made the Ghost equally terrible to the spectator as to himself; and in the descriptive part of the natural emotions which the ghastly vision gave him, the boldness of his expostulation was still governed by decency—manly, but not braving; his voice never rising into that seeming outrage, or wild defiance of what he naturally revered." Booth used to say, "When I played the Ghost to him, instead of awing him he terrified me!" "A farther excellence in Betterton," continues Cibber, "was that he could vary his spirit to the characters he acted. Those wild, impatient starts, that fierce and flashing fire which he threw into Hotspur, never came from the unruffled temper of his Brutus; when the Betterton Brutus was provoked, in his dispute with Cassius, his spirit

flew only to his eye ; his steady look alone supplied that terror, which he disdained an intemperance in his voice should rise to. Thus with a settled dignity of contempt, like an unbending rock, he repelled upon himself the foam of Cassius." "Betterton," says the same critic, in another place, "had so just a sense of what was true or false applause, that I have heard him say, he never thought any kind of it equal to an attentive silence ; that there were many ways of deceiving an audience into a loud one ; but to keep them hushed and quiet was an applause which only truth and merit could arrive at : of which art there never was equal master to himself. From these various excellencies he had so full a possession of the esteem and regard of his auditors, that upon his entrance into every scene he seemed to seize upon the eyes and ears of the giddy and inadvertent."

In "Tatler," No. 71, we read that he played Hamlet at seventy, "and by the prevalent power of proper manner, gesture and voice, appeared through the whole drama a young man of great expectation, vivacity, and enterprise. The soliloquy where he began the celebrated sentence, 'To be, or not to be!' the expostulation where he explains with his mother in her closet ; the noble ardour after seeing his father's ghost ; and his generous distress for the death of Ophelia, are each of them circumstances which dwell strongly upon

the minds of the audience, and would certainly affect their behaviour on any parallel occasion in their own lives." Yet it was at threescore and ten this fine actor said that he was only just beginning to learn his difficult art! I am inclined to think, however, that some of the all but universal eulogium which contemporaries vied with each other in piling upon Betterton was due to the high character and almost faultless life of the man, who in this respect, beyond even his great abilities, was and ever will be one of the noblest ornaments of his great profession. So fortunate was he in pleasing everybody that he obtained the nick-name of infallible Tom. There was no person in the land too high to honour him. He was a critic to whom Dryden listened with respectful attention, and was the adviser of young Pope. Bishop Tillotson received him as a guest at his table; and to those of his own profession, more especially to struggling beginners, he was ever a generous and encouraging friend and adviser. To Cibber he was the first great actor he had seen: as a youth he had revered, almost worshipped him, and learned to see his great parts only with his eyes; therefore no other actor ever approached, in Cibber's opinion, to this first ideal. Yet judging between the praises that have been bestowed upon both, I should place Hart above Betterton; the former had the finer presence, and was equally excellent in tragedy and

comedy, which the latter was not. For although he is said to have been admirable in Sir Toby Belch, Sir Solomon Single, and Falstaff, his appearance was ill-adapted to genteel comedy. Anthony Aston, in his "Supplement to Cibber's Apology," although acknowledging him to be a "superlatively good actor," describes him as being clumsy in figure, with a large head, a short thick neck and a stoop in the shoulders, small eyes, a broad pock-marked face; as being corpulent in body, with thick legs, large feet and short fat arms that he rarely raised above his stomach; his voice, he says, was "low and grumbling," yet he adds, "he could attune it to an artful climax, which enforced universal attention even from fops and orange-girls." Cibber tells us that he did not exceed the middle stature, that his aspect was serious and penetrating, his limbs nearer athletic than delicate proportions, and his voice more manly than sweet; which description is an euphuistic confirmation of Aston's. His style must have been somewhat ponderous and artificial—more of the Kemble than of the Garrick school—as may be gathered from Cibber's definition of perfect acting in the following passage.

"The voice of a singer is not more strictly tied to time and tune, than that of an actor in theatrical elocution: the least syllable too long, or too slightly dwelt upon in a period, depreciates it to nothing; which every syllable, if rightly touched,

shall, like the brightening stroke of light from a master's pencil, give life and spirit to the whole. I never heard a line in tragedy come from Betterton, wherein my judgment, my ear and my imagination, were not fully satisfied; which, since his time I cannot equally say of any actor whatsoever." An elocution so nicely weighed would be tedious and pedantic to our modern ears. Aston tells us, "when he threw himself at Ophelia's feet, he appeared a little too grave for a young student just from the University of Wittenberg," and that "his repartees were more those of a philosopher than the sporting flashes of young Hamlet." But such shortcomings were, after all, but slight blemishes upon what must have been a grand genius. There is much to be said in favour of the artificial as well as of the natural style of acting; a truly great actor can make either acceptable. Garrick created a taste for the natural school; the Kembles took back the audience to the artificial; Kean made another revolution; Macready a fourth; the imitators of each wearied and disgusted audiences and prepared them for the change; there were scores of actors who could pause, and strut and mouth and preach and "imitate humanity so abominably," but only the Kembles could vivify this style with the grandeur, majesty, *the soul, the atmosphere* that made it great. Hundreds could rant and grimace, break metre in hoarse and unmusical accents,

and "out-Herod Herod," but, unilluminated by the lightning flashes of Kean's genius, it was all fustian. Yet the turgid pomposity of the one counterfeit is scarcely more objectionable to art than the flippant, vulgar, sham realisms of the other. Genius creates the fashion for its own style of expression. Talent *may* be imitated, but genius never.

Betterton's last appearance on the stage was on April 10th, 1710, as Melantius, in "The Maid's Tragedy," before one of the largest and most distinguished audiences ever gathered within the walls of a theatre. He was suffering at the time from a severe attack of gout, and before he could put one foot even into a slipper and limp upon the stage, was obliged to use very violent applications. He greatly exerted himself, and acted with even more than his wonted spirit. Three days afterwards he was no more; he had driven the gout to his head, and it proved fatal. He had been for fifty-one years the delight of London theatre-goers. His funeral was the subject of one of the most beautiful papers in the 'Tatler' (No. 167). "Having received notice," it begins, "that the famous actor, Mr. Betterton, was to be interred this evening in the cloisters near Westminster Abbey, I was resolved to walk thither and see the last offices done to a man whom I always very much admired, and from whose action I had received more strong impressions of what is great and noble in human

nature, than from the arguments of the most solemn philosophers, or the descriptions of the most charming poets I have ever read."

There is only one what is called good story told in connection with Betterton. In his latter years he was a landed proprietor in the neighbourhood of Reading. A farmer coming up to London to pay his rent while Bartholomew Fair was on, the actor took him, as a sort of treat, to see the humours of that wonderful assemblage. They went into a puppet show, and the countryman was so delighted with Punch that he swore he would drink with him. "But they are only rags and sticks," explained his conductor; an explanation which the former would not believe until he was taken behind the canvas and shown the puppets hanging up after their performance. At night Betterton placed him in front of the theatre. The play was "The Orphan," and he and Mrs. Barry were performing the principal parts. If Hodge was delighted with the puppets, how wonderfully would he be impressed by the sublime acting of these great flesh and blood performers! "Well, how dost like the play?" was Betterton's inquiry, when he met him after the performance. "I don't know," answered the farmer indifferently, "but it's well enough for sticks and rags." Hodge was evidently a man of fixed ideas, and held tenaciously to those he received.

The next name in Cibber's list is WILL MOUNTFORT, whom, he says, was, in tragedy, the most affecting lover within his memory. "With a fine and handsome appearance, his addresses were resistless from the very tones of his melodious voice, which gave his words such softness, that," as Dryden says,

" ' Like flakes of feather'd snow,
They melted as they fell.' "

In comedy he was inimitable. "He had a particular talent in giving life to bonmots and repartees; the wit of the poet seemed always to come from him extempore, and sharpened into more wit from his brilliant manner of delivering it. . . . He could at once throw off the man of sense, for the brisk, vain, rude and lively coxcomb, the false, flashy pretender to wit and the dupe of his own sufficiency."

A melancholy and tragic end was poor Mountfort's at the age of thirty-three. One Captain Hill, a roué, made desperate love to Mrs. Bracegirdle, who would not listen to his addresses. In some way the fellow got it into his head, perhaps because they played lovers in the comedies, that Mountfort was a favoured rival, and the bar to his own success, an idea that had not the slightest foundation in truth. One night, in company with Lord Mohun, of duelling notoriety, and six hired ruffians, he endeavoured to carry off the actress as she came out of the house of a friend she had been

visiting. But her screams soon brought a rescue, and she was conducted home in safety. Baffled in their plot, the two villains swore they would be revenged upon Mountfort, and waited about Norfolk Street, Strand, where he lodged, until they saw him returning home. Lord Mohun went up to him and saluted him; as he did so, Hill came behind, and after striking him upon the head, passed his sword through the unfortunate actor's body, before he had time to draw in his defence. He died three days afterwards, and lies buried in St. Clement Danes. Lord Mohun was killed, as is well known, some say treacherously, in a duel with the Duke of Hamilton. The peers did not consider murder proved against Hill, and, to their disgrace, acquitted him.

Of all the "boy-actresses," KYNASTON was the most famous. There is a portrait of him in a lady's dress, still in existence; the face is that of a beautiful girl, so charming, so simple, that it looks like a Greuze study. Pepys records his visit to the Cockpit to see "The Loyal Subject" (1660), "where one Kinaston, a boy, acted the Duke's sister, but made the loveliest lady that ever I saw in my life." Later on in the same year he sees him in Jonson's "Epicœne." "Among other things here, Kinaston, the boy, had the good turn to appear in three shapes: first as a poor woman in ordinary clothes, to please Morose; then in fine

clothes, as a gallant; and in them was clearly the prettiest woman in the whole house: and lastly as a man; and then likewise did appear the handsomest man in the house." Downes says, in "*The Roscius Anglicanus*," that it was a subject of dispute among the critics whether any woman thereafter touched the heart so deeply by her acting as he. Ladies of title used to take him into their coaches after the performance was over, and drive with him round the park in his stage dress (the play then commencing at three.) It was for him that King Charles had to wait one night for the play to begin, while he was being shaved for *Evadne* in "*The Maid's Tragedy*." In after years he was equally fine in men's parts. "He had a piercing eye," says Cibber, "and in characters of heroic life, a quick imperious vivacity, in his tone of voice, that painted the tyrant truly terrible." In Dryden's "*Arungzebe*" and in "*Don Sebastian*" he had a fierce, lion-like majesty in his port and utterance that gave the spectator a kind of trembling admiration." *Henry IV.* was one of his greatest parts. "Every sentiment," says the same authority, "came from him as if it had been his own, as if he had himself that instant conceived it, as if he had lost the player, and were the real king he personated." He was even considered to rival Betterton, although his style of acting was entirely different. His career extended from 1659 to 1698.

SMITH, the original Chamont of Otway's "Orphan," was pronounced by Booth to have been almost equal to Betterton. He was a gentleman of private fortune, but driven from the stage by a villainous combination. One night some fop behind the scenes, without any provocation, struck him a blow ; upon hearing this the King was so incensed that he banished the fellow from Court. The next night Smith was received with a storm of hisses ; he did not appear again for some years. He died in 1696.

SANDFORD was an actor of heavy villains ; " he was not a stage villain by choice but by necessity ; for having a low and crooked person, such bodily defects were too strong to be admitted into great, or amiable characters." So identified did he become in the public mind with these parts that it would accept him in no other. A new play was brought out, in which Sandford happened to perform the part of an honest statesman ; the pit, after sitting during three or four acts, in quiet expectation that the well dissembled honesty of Sandford (for such, of course, they concluded it) would soon be discovered, or, at least, involve the other characters in some great distress, upon discovering at the end of the play that Sandford was really an honest man, fairly damned it, as if the author had imposed upon them the most incredible absurdity. VERBRUGGEN, the original

Oronooko, and so famous as Alexander that he was sometimes called by that name, was a noted tragedian of this time. He died in 1708.

NOKES is one of Cibber's most finished portraits. He describes him as an actor of quite a different genius to any he had ever read, heard of or seen, since or before his time. He confesses that though he had the sound of every line he had spoken in his ear, he had often tried, but in vain, to reach the least distant likeness of his *vis comica*. "He scarce ever made his first entrance into a play but he was received with an involuntary applause, not of hands only, for those may be, and have often been partially prostituted and bespoken; but by a general laughter, which the very sight of him provoked, and nature could not resist; yet the louder the laugh, the graver was his look upon it; and sure, the ridiculous solemnity of his features were enough to have set a whole bench of bishops into a titter, could he have been honour'd (may it be no offence to suppose it) with such grave and right reverend auditors. In the ludicrous distresses, which by the laws of comedy, folly is often involved in; he sunk into such a mixture of piteous pusillanimity, and a consternation so ruefully ridiculous and inconsolable, that when he had shook you, to a fatigue of laughter, it became a moot point whether you ought not to have pity'd him. When he debated any matter by himself, he would shut

up his mouth with a dumb studious powt, and roll his full eye into such a vacant amazement, such a palpable ignorance of what to think of it, that his silent perplexity (which would sometimes hold him several minutes) gave your imagination as full content as the most absurd thing he could say upon it. In the character of Sir Martin Marrall, who is always committing blunders to the prejudice of his own interest, when he had brought himself to a dilemma in his affairs by vainly proceeding upon his own head, and was afterwards afraid to look his governing servant, and councillor in the face; what a copious and distressful harangue have I seen him make with his looks (while the house has been in one continual roar for several minutes) before he could prevail with his courage to speak a word to him. Then might you have, at once, read in his face vexation, that his own measures, which he had piqued himself upon, had failed; envy—of his servant's superior wit; distress—to retrieve the occasion he had lost; shame—to confess his folly; and yet a sullen desire to be reconciled and better advised for the future. . . . His person was of the middle size; his voice, clear and audible; his natural countenance grave, and sober; but the moment he spoke, the settled seriousness of his features, was utterly discharged, and a dry, drolling, or laughing levity took such full possession of him, that I can only refer the idea of him

to your imagination. In some of his low characters, that became it, he had a shuffling shamle in his gait, with so contented an ignorance in his aspect, and an awkward absurdity in his gesture, that had you not known him, you could not have believed that naturally he could have had a grain of common sense."

LEIGH was a more mercurial actor, inferior only to Nokes, and so much admired by King Charles, that when he spoke of him it was always as "my actor." He died a week after Mountfort, in 1692. CAVE UNDERHIL was a comedian whose particular excellence was in characters of "still life, I mean the stiff, the heavy, and the stupid; in some he looked as if it were not in the power of human passions to alter a feature of him. In the solemn formality of Obadiah, in "The Committee," and in the boobily heaviness of Lolpoop, in "The Squire of Alsatia," he seemed the immoveable log he stood for. A countenance of wood could not be more fixed than his, when the blockhead of a character required it; his face was full and long; from his crown to the end of his nose was the shorter half of it, so that the disproportion of his lower features, when soberly composed, with an unwandering eye hanging above them, threw him into the most lumpish moping mortal that ever made beholders merry." In 1709 an appeal was made to the public, by the "Tatler," for one "who had been a comic for three generations."

He was a famous First Gravedigger, and it was in that part he took a final leave of the stage. "But, alas," adds Cibber, "so worn and disabled, as if he himself was to have lain in the grave he was digging." He died soon afterwards a superannuated pensioner on the bounty of the patentees.

DICK ESTCOURT has been immortalised by Steele. "The best man I know for heightening the revelry of a company is Estcourt, whose jovial humour diffuses itself from the highest person, at any entertainment, to the meanest waiter." Cibber speaks slightly of his acting, describing him as only an imitator of his predecessors, especially of Nokes. And it appears he was not alone in that estimate, for says Steele: "It has as much surprised me as anything in Nature to have it frequently said that he was not a good player," and ascribes the opinion to a prejudice in favour of former actors in his parts. "When a man of his wit and smartness could put on an utter absence of common sense in his face as he did in Bullfinch in 'The Northern Lass,' and an air of insipid cunning and vivacity in the character of Pounce in 'The Tender Husband' it is folly to dispute his capacity and success, as he was an actor." But most famous was he as a mimic, and kind-hearted Dick Steele discourses most eloquently upon this talent in an admirable paper, which also records his death (*Spectator*, No. 468). He was a great favourite of the

Duke of Marlborough's; and he was the first providore of the Beef Steak Club, then just founded. About a year before his death, 1711, he became landlord of the Bumper Tavern, St. James' Street, and Steele, in *Spectator* 264, calls the attention of his admirers to the fact. Cibber says that he was such an extraordinary mimic that no man or woman, from the coquette to the privy councillor, ever moved or spoke before him, but he could carry their voice, look, mien, and motion instantly into another company. One day Secretary Craggs, with some of his friends, went with Estcourt to Sir Godfrey Kneller's; and told him that a gentleman in company would give such a representation of some great men, his friends, as would surprise him. Estcourt mimicked Lord Somers exactly. Sir Godfrey was highly delighted and laughed at the joke. Then Craggs gave the wink, and Estcourt mimicked Kneller himself; who cried out immediately. '*Nay, there you are out, man, by G—, that is not me.*' He is buried in St. Paul's Covent Garden.

CHAPTER III.

THE LADIES.

Mrs. Betterton, the First Great Lady Macbeth—Mrs. Mountfort—Cibber's Wonderful Description of Her Acting—Mrs. Bracegirdle—Anecdotes of Her Charity and Spotless Character—Mrs. Barry—Her Early Career—Dismissed the Theatre, three Times for Incapacity—Otway's Evil Genius—Her Great Talent.

OF the ladies of this period the precedence, by date, must be given to Mrs. Sanderson,* afterwards MRS. BETTERTON an admirable artiste. Pepys, who always calls her Ianthe, from the part she played in "The Siege of Rhodes," praises her sweet voice. Cibber says "she was so great a mistress of Nature, that even Mrs. Barry, who acted Lady Macbeth after her, could not in that part, with all her superior strength and melody of voice, throw out those quick and careless strokes of terror, from the disorder of a guilty mind, which the other gave us, with a facility in her manner that rendered them at once tremendous and delight-

* Previous to the first two or three decades of the eighteenth century, the term *Mistress* was used to designate both single and married ladies; *Miss* being only applied to women of loose character, such being called "my Lord So-and-so's *Miss*."

ful." He adds that she chiefly excelled in the plays of Shakespeare, in which she was without a rival. She retired from the stage some years before her husband, in 1694, and survived him only eighteen months, losing her senses at his death. She was a woman of unblemished reputation.

MRS. MOUNTFORT, who afterwards married Verbruggen, was even more famous than her husband, and Cibber says, "was mistress of more variety of humour than I ever knew in any one woman actress." His sketch of this lady is the finest of all his fine portraits. She was equally at home in the broadest personation of a country wench and in the finest of fine ladies: "In a play of D'Urfey's, now forgotten, called "The Western Lass," which part she acted, she transformed her whole being, body, shape, voice, language, look, and features, into almost another animal; with a strong Devonshire dialect, a broad laughing voice, a poking head, round shoulders, an unconceiving eye, and the most bediz'ning dowdy dress, that ever covered the untrained limbs of a Joan Trot. To have seen her here, you would have thought it impossible the same creature could ever have been recovered, to what was as easy to her, the gay, the lively, and the desirable. Nor was her humour limited to her sex; for while her shape permitted, she was a more adroit pretty fellow, than is usually seen upon the stage. Her easy air,

action, mien, and gesture, quite changed from the quoin, to the cocked hat, and cavalier in fashion. People were so fond of seeing her a man, that when the part of Bayes in the "Rehearsal," had, for some time, lain dormant, she was desired to take it up, which I have seen her act with all the true, coxcomby spirit and humour, that the sufficiency of the character required. But what found most employment for her whole various excellence at once, was the part of Melantha, in 'Marriage à la Mode.' Melantha is as finished an impertinent as ever fluttered in a drawing-room, and seems to contain the most complete system of female foppery, that could possibly be crowded into the tortured form of a fine lady. Her language, dress, motion, manners, soul, and body, are in a continual hurry to be something more than is necessary or commendable. And though I doubt it will be a vain labour, to offer you a just likeness of Mrs. Mountfort's action, yet the fantastic impression is still so strong in my memory, that I cannot help saying something, though fantastically, about it. The first ridiculous airs that break from her, are, upon a gallant never seen before, who delivers her a letter from her father, recommending him to her good graces, as an honourable lover. Here now, one would think she might naturally show a little of the sex's decent reserve, though never so lightly covered. No, sir; not a tittle of

it. Modesty is the virtue of a poor-soul'd country gentlewoman; she is too much a court lady, to be under so vulgar a confusion; she reads the letter, therefore, with a careless, dropping lip, and an erected brow, humming it hastily over, as if she were impatient to outgo her father's commands, by making a complete conquest of him at once; and that the letter might not embarrass her attack, crack, she crumbles it at once, into her palm, and pours upon him her whole artillery of airs, eyes, and motion; down goes her dainty, diving body, to the ground, as if she were sinking under the unconscious load of her own attractions; then launches into a flood of fine language, and compliment, still playing her chest forward in fifty falls and risings, like a swan upon waving water; and, to complete her impertinence, she is so rapidly fond of her own wit, that she will not give her lover leave to praise it: silent assenting bows, and vain endeavours to speak, are all the share of the conversation he is admitted to, which, at last, he is relieved from, by her engagement to half a score visits, which she *swims* from him to make, with a promise to return in a twinkling." She died in 1703.

MRS. BRACEGIRDLE may be said to have been reared in the theatre, for she made her first appearance, as a page, at six years old. She was a *protégée* and pupil of the Bettertons. From 1680 to 1707,

“never,” says Cibber, “was any woman in such general favour of the spectators.” Her private character was unimpeachable, for the hints of such a dissolute fellow as Tom Brown are no proofs against the universal testimonies in her favour.” When one of her would be lovers, the Earl of Burlington, sent her by a footman a present of china and a letter, she kept the letter but made the servant take back the china, saying he had made a mistake as that was for his lady. And his lady got it, much doubtless to her surprise and gratification, and to his lord’s chagrin. “She was the darling of the theatre,” to again quote Cibber, “for it will be no extravagant thing to say, scarce an audience saw her that were less than half of them lovers, without a suspected favourite among them; and though she may be said to have been the universal passion, and under the highest temptation, her constancy in resisting them served but to increase her admirers. It was even a fashion among the gay and young to have a taste or *tendre* for Mrs. Bracegirdle.” In Dryden’s epilogue to “King Arthur,” written for her, allusion is made to these unceasing importunities, and it commences with—

“I have had to-day a dozen billets-doux
From fops, and wits, and cits, and Bow Street beaux:
Some from Whitehall, but from the Temple more:
A Covent Garden porter brought me four.”

She then proceeds to read one or two of these

effusions, probably rhymed from originals actually received.

Of her personal appearance it was said : "She had no greater claim to beauty than the most desirable brunette might pretend to. But her youth and lively aspect threw out such a glow of health and cheerfulness, that on the stage few spectators could behold her without desire." Cibber is scarcely just to her attractions, for in the portrait I have seen the features are most charming. To coldly criticise such a siren would have been impossible, and the old actor adds : "In all the chief parts she performed, the desirable was so predominant that no judge could be cold enough to consider from what other particular excellence she became delightful. If anything could excuse that desperate extravagance of love, that almost frantic passion of Lee's Alexander the Great, it must have been when Mrs. Bracegirdle was his Statira : as when she acted Millamant, all the faults, follies, and affectations of that agreeable tyrant, were venially melted down into so many charms, and attractions of a conscious beauty." Congreve was her devoted admirer : she was the original representative of all his heroines, and there was a warm friendship between them unto the end of his life ; but there is no shadow of evidence that it exceeded the platonic boundary. Hear how he wrote of her :

“ Pious Belinda goes to prayers
Whene’er I ask the favour :
Yet the tender fool’s in tears
When she believes I’ll leave her.
Would I were free from this restraint,
Or else had power to win her,
Would she could make of me a saint,
Or I of her a sinner.”

The Lords Dorset, Devonshire, and Halifax presented her with the sum of eight hundred pounds, simply as a mark of their esteem for her private character. She was a good, charitable creature too, and used to go into Clare Market to give money to the poor unemployed basket-women, and she could not pass through that neighbourhood without being greeted with the grateful salutations of people of all degrees. She retired from the stage in 1707, in the very height of her fame ; but beautiful Anne Oldfield had succeeded to some of her parts, and her youth and brilliant talents were casting the elder actress into the shade. She lived many years afterwards, and died in 1748 at over four score. Once she returned to the stage for a single night ; it was to play Angelica in “ Love for Love” for her old friend Betterton’s benefit.

I have reserved the name, which is, perhaps, the greatest of all in that matchless company, immortalised by Cibber, for the last—ELIZABETH BARRY. It appears that she was the daughter of a barrister who raised a troop for the service of Charles I.

Curll says that Lady Davanant, out of friendship for his memory, reared and educated his daughter, and recommended her to adopt the stage as a profession. Antony Aston, however, who was living in her time, asserts, that "she was woman to Lady Shelton, of Norfolk, (my good mother), when Lord Rochester took her on the stage, where, for some time, they could make nothing of her, she could neither sing, nor dance, no, not even in a country dance." To be "woman," however, to a lady of title, in those days, was considered a position not derogatory to a person of good family, fallen upon evil times. All agree that at first she showed such little capacity for her profession that she was pronounced utterly incapable, and dismissed from the theatre three times in succession. Then, according to Curll's story, Rochester made a wager that within six months he would train her to be one of the finest actresses upon the stage. He took incredible pains with his task, made her rehearse some parts thirty times in the dresses, and exactly as she was to perform them at night. It was as the Queen of Hungary, in Lord Orrery's play of "Mustapha," he decided to bring her out. Her tutor had uttered no vain boast; her acting of the part produced a profound impression, and from that time Mrs. Barry became not only one of the finest, but *the* finest actress of the day, in spite of Mrs. Betterton surpassing her in Shakespearian parts. To Roches-

ter she undoubtedly owed the training that developed her latent talent, and of all the women who became the prey of this English Don Juan, she was the only one for whom he had any real affection. As a woman, no good can be said of Elizabeth Barry; she was cold, heartless, mercenary. She was the evil genius of the unhappy Otway, who loved her to distraction, and who created for her Belvidera and Monimia. She was said to have been mistress of every passion of the mind; love, joy, grief, rage, tenderness, and jealousy were all represented by her with equal skill and effect. Cibber says that in characters of greatness her presence was full of dignity, her mien and motion superb and gracefully majestic, her voice so full, clear, and strong that no violence of passion could be too much for her; that in the art of exciting pity she had a passion beyond all the actresses he had ever seen, or that imagination could conceive; that in scenes of anger and defiance she was impetuous and terrible. Her greatest tragic impersonations were Otway's two famous heroines, and Cleopatra and Roxana. Aston speaks highly of her comedy. She was the original Clarissa in the "Confederacy," and Lady Brute in "The Provoked Wife," of Isabella in Southerne's "Fatal Marriage," and of Calista in Rowe's "Fair Penitent." She created one hundred and nineteen parts, and among these are many of the most famous of the drama. So delighted was Mary of Modena with her imper-

sonation of Queen Elizabeth, in "The Unhappy Favourite," that, when Duchess of York, she presented her with her own wedding dress for the part, and after she became Queen, with her coronation robes.* Mrs. Barry was the first performer to whom a benefit was given; a privilege accorded, her on account of her extraordinary abilities, in the year 1687.† Her last appearance upon the stage was as Lady Easy in the "Careless Husband," on June 13, 1710. Her last years were passed in rural retirement, in the Vale of Acton, but she died, in 1713, in Red Lion Court. She is buried in the south aisle of Acton Church, where there is a tablet to her memory.

Davies says: "The stage perhaps never produced four such handsome women at once as Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, Mrs. Mountfort, and Mrs. Bowman. When they stood together in the last scene of "The Old Bachelor," the audience was struck with so fine a group of beauty, and broke into loud applause."

* It was not an uncommon custom for the nobility and even the sovereigns to send their cast off dress suits to the theatre wardrobes.

† So says Cibber; but in Gildon's *Life of Betterton*, there is a copy of an agreement, dated 1681, between Charles Hart, Edward Kynaston, and other actors, in which it is stipulated that the sum of five shillings shall be paid to each of the latter on every performance, "excepting the days the young men or young women play for their own profit only."

CHAPTER IV.

COLLEY CIBBER.

His Early Career—How he obtained his First Salary—His First Success—George Powel and the Bailiffs—How Colley obtained his First Success—His First Play—More Disappointment—"Richard the Third" and the "Careless Husband"—The New Theatre in the Haymarket—Suspension of the Drury Lane Patent—The Triumvirate—Description of the Theatre of the Period—Of the Audiences—Anecdotes—Dresses—Scenery, &c.

IT was malice alone, unmitigated by any show of truth or justice, that made Pope fix upon Colley Cibber as the second hero of "The Dunciad." Theobald might have deserved such a distinction, but there was no man of that day to whom the term "dullard" could be less appropriately applied than to the witty creator of Lord Foppington and Lady Betty Modish, to the author of "The Apology," of "The Careless Husband," the *collaborateur* of Vanbrugh in "The Provoked Husband," and one of the finest comedians of the age. Yet that malice has familiarised the name of Cibber—as it has so many others less deserving of immortality—to thousands who might otherwise have never heard of it, while many actors of his generation, even more famous than he, are now

almost unknown except to students of dramatic literature.

Cibber was born in 1671 in Southampton Street, Strand; his father, who was a sculptor and a native of Holstein, had come over to England previous to the Restoration. His handiwork may still be seen in the bassi-relievi on the base of the Monument, and in the figures of Raving and Melancholy Madness over the gates of Bedlam. His mother, whose maiden name was Colley, was of a good old Northamptonshire family. The boy was sent to the Grantham Free Grammar School, where he obtained such education as such institutions then afforded. Although in his "Life" he accuses himself of "a giddy negligence" in his studies, he displayed, even at this early period, that indomitable assurance, that tact in seizing upon every opportunity of distinguishing himself, which were the secrets of his successful career. Upon the death of Charles the Second, the master of the school proposed to the boys to compete in the composition of a funeral ode; not one had the courage to make the attempt except Master Colley. This procured him high favour with the pedagogue, and the hatred of all the boys of his form. A Coronation Ode followed, produced, he says, in about half an hour. "I cannot say it was much above the merry style of *Sing! Sing the day and sing the song* in the farces; yet, bad as it was, it

served to get the school a play-day, and to make me not a little vain upon it, which last effect so disgusted my playfellows that they left me out of the party I had most a mind to be of in that day's recreation." Neither in his youth nor his manhood was he a favourite with his associates; he had a mocking, jeering humour, which he confesses made him many enemies through life. He tried for a scholarship at Winchester, but failed. Already, however, he had conceived a predilection for the stage, and rather rejoiced in his failure.

But first of all he did a little soldiering. When the Revolution broke out, his father was engaged upon some important work at Chatsworth, and joined the forces which the Duke of Devonshire raised to aid the Prince of Orange. Considering his son, however, better able to undertake such duties than himself, he begged the Duke to accept him as a substitute. In this capacity Colley had the honour of being one of an escort sent out from Nottingham to meet the Princess Anne, when she fled from London with Lady Churchill; at table that night he was appointed to wait upon the last-named lady—and fell desperately in love with her!

There was nothing else remarkable in Mr. Cibber's military career, and the contingent to which he belonged was very soon discharged. The Duke promised to consider what could be done for this promising young man, who forthwith went

off to London to wait the result of his Grace's cogitations—and to become a dangler about the theatre. In 1690 he was admitted within the magic circle. It was not a profitable advancement, as one of the rules of the patentees was that every tyro should serve half a year's probation before receiving any pay. "Pay," he says, "was the least of my concern; the joy and privilege of every day seeing plays, for nothing, I thought was a sufficient consideration for the best of my services. So that it was no pain to my patience that I waited three quarters of a year, before I was taken into a salary of ten shillings a week, which, with the assistance of food and raiment at my father's house, I then thought a most plentiful accession, and myself the happiest of mortals. The first thing that enters into the head of a young actor is that of being a hero. In this ambition I was soon snubbed, by the insufficiency of my voice; to which might be added, an uninformed meagre person (though then not ill-made) with a dismal pale complexion." He was known in the theatre by the name of Master Colley; after waiting for some time he obtained the honour of carrying on a message, in some play, to Betterton; but was so terrified or so nervous that the entire scene was disconcerted by him. Betterton angrily demanded who the young fellow was. Downes, the prompter, replied, "Master Colley." "Then forfeit Master

Colley," replied the tragedian. "Why, Sir, he has no salary," said Downes. "No? Then put him down ten shillings a week and forfeit him five." And to this accident Cibber was indebted for the first money he ever received from his profession.

The first part in which he made any success was the small character of the chaplain in Otway's "Orphan." "If he does not make a good actor I'll be ——!" cried Goodman, then retired from the profession. "The surprise of being commended by one who had been himself so eminent upon the stage, and in so positive a manner, was more than I could support, in a word it almost took away my breath, and (laugh if you please) fairly drew tears from my eyes. I will still make it a question whether Alexander himself, or Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, when at the head of their first victorious armies, could feel a greater transport in their bosoms than I did then in mine, when but in the rear of this troop of comedians."

In 1693, before he was twenty-two, he married, upon twenty pounds a year allowed by his father, and twenty shillings a week salary. And he would have entered into the domesticities upon even a less income but for an accident. A performance of the "Double Dealer" was commanded by Queen Mary. Kynaston, who was to play Touchwood, being taken ill the day before, Congreve recommended that the part should be given

to Cibber, and was so pleased with his rendering that he spoke to the patentees in his favour, who thereupon advanced him from fifteen to twenty shillings. But professionally his elevation was but momentary: he sank back into his old insignificance, and when he wrote a prologue for the opening night of the season, two years later, although the management declared him to be a "very ingenious young man," and presented him with two guineas, he was not considered worthy to deliver it. It must have been a bitter pill for a man so vain and ambitious to swallow, but he did gulp it down, and struggled on with his young wife, who had by this time made an addition to his incumbrances and was promising another, eagerly watching for fresh chances, undaunted by the barren results of previous ones. Yet he might have waited until his hair was grey for the longed-for promotion, but for that convulsion in the theatrical world, described in the last chapter, which happened in 1695, and broke up the company. Here was a chance for aspirants to come to the fore, and many did, but not, according to Cibber, very advantageously. "All," he says, "became at once the spoil of self-conceit. Shakespeare was defaced and tortured in every signal character. Hamlet and Othello lost in one hour all their good sense, their dignity, and fame. Brutus and Cassius became noisy, blustering, with bold unmeaning

eyes, mistaken sentiments, and turgid elocution." These remarks, however, must be taken *cum grano*. Cibber never spoke well of his contemporaries, and seems to have been very splenetic against George Powel, who succeeded to the principal parts after Betterton's defection. Although undoubtedly very inferior to his great predecessor, he did not deserve so sweeping a condemnation. "He wanted nothing but sobriety and industry," says Geneste, (History of the Stage,) "to have made him the first actor of his time, Betterton excepted." But dissipation nullified these gifts. He frequently appeared upon the stage intoxicated; he was so hunted by sheriffs' officers that he used to walk through the streets with his sword in his hand, and whenever he saw one of those gentry approaching would roar out, "Get on the other side of the way, you dog." To which the other, knowing his man and what he might expect, would answer humbly, "We don't want you now, Mr. Powel." He died in 1714, and is buried in St. Clement Danes.

The secret of poor Colley's spleen is probably contained in this sentence. "None of those great parts ever fell to my share, nor indeed could I get one good part of any kind till many months after, unless it were of that sort which nobody else cared for or would venture to expose themselves in. The first unintended favour, therefore, of a part of any value, necessity threw upon me."

There was deadly feud between the two theatres, and each strained every nerve to steal a march upon the other. The Drury Lane company having announced that they would perform "Hamlet" for the first time, on a certain date, Lincoln's Inn Fields issued bills for the representation of that tragedy on the same evening. The Drury Laneites were struck with consternation. To bring their Hamlet in competition with Betterton's was not to be thought of; the piece must be changed. The one substituted was Congreve's "Old Bachelor." This choice was made by Powel, who thought to revenge himself by mimicking Betterton in the principal character. New bills were immediately issued and books of the comedy sent for, there not being two of the company who had ever played in the piece, and there were only six hours before the curtain would rise. But in looking through the cast, a new difficulty presented itself. Fondlewife, Dogget's great part, had been forgotten. In desperation, somebody suggested that Cibber had been heard at different times to express a great desire to play that character. There were headshakings; but Powel, bent upon his small revenge, adopted the suggestion with the very ungracious remark, "If the fool has a mind to blow himself up at once, let us e'en give him a clear stage for it." So it was agreed. Colley had so often witnessed Dogget's performance that he was nearly

perfect in the words, and even rehearsed from memory, while all the others were obliged to read. Powel had resolved to imitate Betterton, Cibber resolved to reproduce Dogget. "At my first appearance," he says, "one might have imagined, by the various murmurs of the audience, that they were in doubt whether Dogget himself were not returned, or that they could not conceive what strange face it could be that so nearly resembled him, for I had laid the tint of forty years more than my real age upon my features, and to the minute placing of a hair was dressed exactly like him. When I spoke the surprise was still greater, as if I had not only borrowed his clothes, but his voice too." His success was immense. "A much better actor might have been proud of the applause that followed me; after one loud plaudit was ended, and sunk into a general whisper, that seemed still to continue their private approbation, it revived to a second, and again to a third still louder than the former." Dogget himself was in the pit contemplating his double! But not even this triumph could procure his advancement, and he was again dropped back into his former position; indeed it was turned against him, for it was presumed that in no other line could he be successful, and his application for parts was always met with, "It is not in your way." His answer indicates the true artist: "I think anything, naturally written,

ought to be in everybody's way that pretends to be an actor." "This," he says, "was looked upon as vain, impracticable conceit of my own." Poor Colley ! his was indeed a hard fight for fame and position.

These rebuffs, as he says, were "enough, perhaps, to make a young fellow of more modesty despair ; but being of a temper not easily disheartened, I resolved to leave nothing unattempted that might show me in some new rank of distinction. Having then no other resource, I was at last reduced to write a character for myself." The play, upon which he was engaged a year, was "Love's Last Shift ;" the principal part, Sir Novelty Fashion, was a satire upon the fopperies of the day. He induced Southerne to hear him read it, and the veteran dramatist was so well satisfied that he recommended it to the patentees. Yet still, considering what he had done, there was a strange distrust of Cibber's powers, and while he was standing at the wing before the play commenced on the first night, Southerne took him by the hand and said : "Young man ! I pronounce thy play a good one ; I will answer for its success, if thou dost not spoil it by thy own action." But his fears were misplaced, and the success of both author and actor was so great that people were in doubt to which they should give the preference. The Lord Chamberlain pronounced it to be the best first play that any author in his

memory had produced ; and that for a young fellow to show himself such an actor and such a writer in one day was something extraordinary.

Yet even this double success failed to permanently improve his position ; another year elapsed, and no fresh part of any importance was entrusted to him, although he had proved his versatility by his admirable rendering of such widely dissimilar characters as the uxorious old Fondlewife and the exquisite fop Sir Novelty Fashion. But it is said that all things come to the man who waits, and twelve months after the production of his comedy, Vanbrugh wrote a sequel to it, "The Relapse," in which Sir Novelty, now ennobled as Lord Foppington, was assigned to Cibber. This continued throughout his life to be one of his most famous parts. "The Relapse" was Vanbrugh's first work, and a few months afterwards he brought out "Æsop," in which Cibber sustained the title-role as successfully as he had Lord Foppington. He had by this time arrived at the munificent salary of thirty shillings per week, which Christopher Rich, who was now sole manager of the theatre, did not always pay him. "While the actors were in this condition," he says, "I think I may very well be excused in my presuming to write plays, which I was forced to do, for the support of my increasing family, my precarious income as an actor being then too scant to supply it with even

the necessaries of life. It may be observable, too, that my nurse and my muse were equally prolific; that the one was seldom the mother of a child but in the same year the other made me the father of a play."

His second comedy, "*Woman's Wit*" (1697), was a dead failure; the same may be said of "*Xerxes*," a tragedy (1699). In 1700, he produced his famous alteration of Shakespeare's "*Richard the Third*"—the *Richard* of Garrick, Cooke, Kean, which kept the stage, to the exclusion of the original play, until Mr. Irving's revival last year. Although very inferior to the tragedy upon which it was founded, it is a remarkably clever piece of stage-craft, the cleverest of all the Shakespearian alterations, and has outlived them all. "*Love Makes a Man*" followed in the next year; "*She Wou'd and she Wou'd not*," a capital comedy of intrigue of the Spanish school, full of bustle and situation, was produced in 1703. In 1704, he brought out his finest work, "*The Careless Husband*," into which he again brought his old favourite, Lord Foppington. This was a great advance upon "*Love's Last Shift*," which, quoting Congreve, he confesses had in it many things "that were like wit, that in reality were not wit, and has a great deal of puerility and frothy stage language in it." "*The Careless Husband*" would not be acceptable to a modern audience, in spite of its witty and frequently brilliant

dialogue ; it is all talk, with scarcely any situation ; the serious scenes, as is the case in all his plays, are strained and pedantic, Sir Charles, Lady Easy, and Morelove tedious ; the famous fop and libertine, Lord Foppington, admirably as he pictured the fine gentlemen of that day, is now obsolete, for coxcombry changes its form with every change of fashion and manners, and the exquisite of to-day, is quite a different animal to that of our youth. The gem of the play, however, and one of the finest comic conceptions of the last century, is Lady Betty Modish, the vain, frivolous, tormenting coquette, yet, at the bottom, good-hearted woman of fashion. Such a character, stripped of the colouring and conventionalities of the age, is as true to nature now as it was then. It is also remarkable as having brought into fame the celebrated Mrs. Oldfield, of whom more anon.

Only a few years previously, the Drury Lane company could scarcely hold their own against their rivals ; but the tables were beginning to turn. Betterton's company was entirely made up of veterans whose powers were fast decaying ; "and though," says Cibber, "we were too young to be excellent, we were not too old to be better." "But," he adds, "what will not society depreciate ? For though I must own and avow in our highest prosperity, I always thought we were greatly their inferiors, yet by our good fortune of being seen in

quite new lights, which several new written plays had shown us in, we now began to make a considerable stand against them." Cibber is too modest.

The theatre in Portugal Street, was only a Tennis Court, small in size and poorly fitted up; in 1705 Sir John Vanbrugh started a project for building a theatre in the Haymarket; a subscription of one hundred pounds each was raised among thirty persons of quality and gave them admission for life. Betterton and his company placed themselves under Vanbrugh's direction. The house opened with an opera translated from the Italian, the first ever produced in this country, entitled "The Triumph of Love." It was performed only three days to indifferent houses, upon which Sir John produced his finest comedy "The Confederacy." But the grand company had now sadly fallen from its high estate. Smith, Kynaston, Sandford and Leigh were dead, and Mrs. Betterton and Underhil had retired. The speculation was not successful, the house was bad for speaking, it was surrounded by green fields, and, says Cibber. "The City, the Inns of Court, and the middle part of the town, which were the most constant support of a theatre, were now too far out of the reach of an easy walk, and coach hire is often too hard a task upon the pit and gallery." A union of the two houses was proposed, but to this Rich would not agree.

Then Vanbrugh made over the new theatre, which was called the Queen's, to Mr. Owen Swiney at a rental of five pounds for every acting day, and not to exceed seven hundred in the year.

A dispute over the terms of their benefits,* of which the patentees desired to rob them of about a third of their due, so incensed the actors, that they appealed to the Lord Chamberlain for protection, and thereupon leave was given to Swiney to enlist as many of the actors of Drury Lane as would head a company, under their own management, and to be sharers with him. Those who went over were Wilks, Dogget, Estcourt, Mills, Johnson, Bullock, Mrs. Oldfield, and a little later, Cibber. Very shortly afterwards the Drury Lane patent was suspended by the Chamberlain, and the house closed. The deserters were now masters of the situation; dramatic performances were alternated with operatic; but the speculation was not particularly successful, which Cibber ascribes to the enormous excitement roused just then by the trial of Dr. Sacheverell, which absorbed the attention of all classes of people. And by and by Drury Lane was opened by special license under the

* This privilege, Cibber says, was confined to Mrs. Barry until after the division of the Company in 1695, when the patentees being often unable to meet the actors' salaries were glad to compound with them by giving them a benefit night. At length the exception became the rule, and a benefit was the chief article in every theatrical agreement. See note page 92.

management of Mr. William Collier, the member for Truro, and Shadwell's "Fair Quaker of Deal," with Miss Santlow as Dorcas Zeal, nightly crowded the old house. After some further vicissitudes, upon which I have not space to dwell, the actors were once more united at Old Drury; and in 1714, a license was granted during the Queen's pleasure, in the names of Collier, Cibber, Wilks and Dogget. Collier by whose interest the license had been procured, was the first commissioned manager, and although his position was only a sinecure, was paid £700 a year. Yet until 1714, the three comedians never realized less than £1,000 a per annum.

Upon the Queen's death the house was closed, according to custom, for six weeks, and as Collier's license was thereby annulled, the triumvirate applied to Sir Richard Steele, as a staunch supporter of the new dynasty, to obtain its renewal, offering him Collier's position for so doing. A license for his life and three years afterwards was immediately obtained through the Duke of Marlborough.

About the same time John Rich, the son of Christopher, then just dead, obtained leave to open a new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields (1714) under the united patent of Killigrew and Davenant. This considerably lessened the receipts at the old house; as a compensation Steele exerted his influence successfully to have the license changed to a patent.

In 1719, however, having offended his patron, the Duke of Newcastle, by his opposition to Lord Sunderland's Peerage Bill, the patent was suspended, and the theatre closed. But in a few days the comedians procured a temporary license, and the patent was renewed in 1721.

Having so far traced, what may be called the commercial history of the theatre, let us now endeavour, by the help of Cibber, to picture its aspect. The stage projected right forward into the pit in a semi-oval figure, the proscenium was so deep that on each side there were two doors of entrance. Cibber describes the advantage of thus bringing the actors close to the audience; every varying shade of expression upon their features was distinctly visible, the softest and most delicate tones of the voice were audible, and no minutiae, of their art was lost to the attentive spectator. In a picture of Covent Garden, dated 1763, we see the two stage boxes on either side, while the stage itself is lit at the back by four hoops of candles, such as were once used in booths at a fair, and there are no footlights. These hoops were abolished by Garrick in 1765, when he substituted concealed lamps. But the smallness of the theatres,* which at times were unable to accommodate all their patrons, had its serious inconveniences as well as its advantages. On crowded

* Garrick's Drury Lane, after his alteration, held only about two thousand people and £400 in money.

nights an amphitheatre of seats was raised upon the stage, "where," says Wilkinson, "there would be groups of ill-dressed lads and persons sitting on the stage in front, three or four rows deep; otherwise those who sat behind could not have seen, and a riot would have ensued; so in fact a performer on a popular night could not step with safety, lest he should thereby hurt or offend, or be thrown down amidst scores of idle and tipsy apprentices. But it was the beaux who usually affected this part of the house. There was only one entrance on each side the stage, which was always particularly crowded. First they sported their own figures to gratify self-consequence, and impede and interfere with the performers who had to come on and go off the stage. They loved to affront the audience, particularly the gallery portion, who would answer by showering down oranges and half eaten apples to the great terror of the ladies in the pit, who were so closely wedged they could not move." The presence of an audience upon the stage frequently led to ludicrous contretemps. Such as when a woman once during the performance of *Hamlet*, having heard him complain just before that the air was very cold, when he threw off his hat upon the appearance of the Ghost, picked it up and replaced it very carefully upon his head. Upon which both the Prince of Denmark and the apparition made a precipitate retreat amidst roars of laughter. Juliet

frequently lay in her tomb surrounded by some scores of people, and Macbeth returning from the murder of Duncan, had to force his way through a crowd of beaux. Several attempts were made to abolish this pernicious custom ; in 1711 a royal proclamation forbade any person to sit upon the stage ; but it produced little effect, and the custom continued until it was finally suppressed by Garrick in 1762. Like most reforms it was ill received at first. It was unpopular with the beaux and gallants, who thus lost an opportunity of displaying themselves, and with the actors as it diminished the profits of their benefits ; to meet the latter Garrick, by throwing back the stage, increased the accommodation in front. It was the small beginning of a great revolution, it led the way to those gigantic theatres which entirely changed the conditions of the dramatic art.

Upon a stage, half proscenium, and lighted by only four hoops of candles, scenic effects were impossible ; and until the Kemble time "the flats and drops" of the great patent houses were as dingy and unpretentious as those of a country fit-up at the present day. Appropriateness of costume was equally neglected ; all plays, of whatever age and country, were dressed in the fashion of the time, and very shabbily too. In a newspaper dated 1723, we read, "King Duncan has not had a new habit for the last century, Julius

Cæsar was as ragged as a colt, and his guards were a ragged regiment; only the parts played by the managers (the triumvirate) were well-dressed." Tate Wilkinson, writing as late as 1790, says, "The ladies and gentlemen in modern tragedies, forty years ago, at Covent Garden, wore all the old laced clothes which had done many years service at Lincoln's Inn." So heavy were their embossed petticoats that a lady could not move without a page to bear up her train, and, however secret might be the conversation, these supernumeraries were always present. Servants and rustic maidens dressed as finely as their mistresses, and it was impossible to distinguish by costume the mistress from the maid."

Under the management of our triumvirate of actors, a period of prosperity was inaugurated unknown to the stage, at least since the early years of the Restoration. "For more than twenty years," says Victor, "their green-rooms were free from indecencies of every kind, and might justly be compared to the most elegant drawing-rooms of the prime quality; no fops, or coxcombs, ever shewed their monkey tricks there; but if they chanced to thrust in they were awed into respect, even persons of the first rank and taste, of both sexes, would often mix with the performers without any stain to their honour or understanding."

CHAPTER V.

COLLEY CIBBER AND HIS ASSOCIATES.

Dogget—Robert Wilks—His Extraordinary Diligence—A Sketch of the Triumvirate—The Managers in Council—Barton Booth—His Success as Cato—Proposed as a Sharer—His Marriage—His Characters—Cibber's Quarrel with Pope—His Retirement—His Justice Shallow—His Death—Theophilus Cibber—Joe Miller—Mrs. Oldfield—Mrs. Porter—"Polly Peachem."

BEFORE proceeding farther with Cibber's individual career, let us turn to his associates in management, with whom he is now so closely connected. DOGGET was of humble origin; had strolled the provinces before his talents procured him a foremost position upon the London stage, where he made his first appearance in 1691. "He was the most original, and the strictest observer of Nature of all his contemporaries," says Cibber. "He borrowed from none of them; his manner was his own; he was a pattern to others, whose greatest merit was, that they had sometimes tolerably imitated him. In dressing a character to the greatest exactness, he was remarkably skilful; the least article of whatever habit he wore seemed in some degree to speak and mark the

different humour he presented. He could be extremely ridiculous, without stepping into the least impropriety to make him so. His greatest success was in characters of lower life, which he improved from the delight he took in his observations of that kind in the real world. In songs and particular dances too, of humour, he had no competitor. Congreve was a great admirer of him, and found his account in the characters he expressly wrote for him. In those of Fondlewife, in "The Old Bachelor," and Ben, in "Love for Love," no author and no actor could be more obliged to their mutual masterly performances. He was very acceptable to several persons of high rank and taste, though he seldom cared to be the comedian but among his more intimate acquaintance."

He could paint his face to exactly represent any age, seventy, eighty, ninety. Sir Godfrey Kneller told him one day at Button's that he excelled him in painting; for that he could only copy nature from the originals before him, but that he (Dogget) could vary them at pleasure, and yet keep a close likeness. No temptation could ever induce him to step out of his own line of characters, by which prudence he always appeared equally excellent. His great passion was stock-jobbing, and no man was better known upon 'Change, for every moment he could spare from his professional duties was passed there. He was one of the most thorough-going Whigs of the day; and he left in his will a

sum of money for a coat and badge, to be rowed for each year from London Bridge to Chelsea, on the first of August, by six Thames watermen, to celebrate the accession of George I. He was obstinate and testy, and so impatient of crosses and contradictions, that he was once three years out of an engagement, because he could not endure the common annoyances inseparable from his profession. He was generally so warm in the pursuit of his own interest that he frequently outran it.

In striking contrast to this crabbed, eccentric, old money-grubber, was the third member of the triumvirate, ROBERT WILKS. He came of a good Worcestershire family settled at Bromsgrove. His grandfather, Judge Wilks, raised a troop of horse for Charles I., and brought himself to beggary. The father of Robert went over to Ireland, where the boy was born in 1665. He began life as a government clerk in Dublin, kept company with actors, took part in private theatricals, and was so much applauded in *Othello* that—it was the old story which has been told over and over again—pens, ink, and account-books were cast aside, and behold our stage-struck youth in London waiting upon Mr. Betterton to state his views and ask his advice. The great actor referred him to the manager, Christopher Rich, who, liking his manner and appearance, engaged him upon the munificent salary of fifteen shillings a week, from which

half-a-crown was to be deducted for instruction in dancing. This was in 1690, he being then twenty-five years of age. And upon this income young Wilks actually married. Promising as he was, he, like Cibber, had little chance of distinguishing himself among so many experienced rivals; but he had not the patience of Colley, and, after vainly soliciting an advance of salary, resolved to seek his fortune elsewhere. "I fancy," said Betterton, upon his departure, "that that gentleman" (Rich, the manager), "if he has not too much obstinacy to own it, will be the first that repents your parting, for, if I foresee aright, you will be greatly wanted here." His words were prophetic. Wilks was, at Betterton's recommendation, engaged by the manager of the Dublin theatre at sixty pounds a year and a clear benefit. His success in the Irish capital was soon assured, and such reports of his acting came across the Channel that by-and-by, after Mountfort's death had left an irreparable breach in his forces, Rich offered him four pounds a week, a most tempting salary in those days, to return. Wilks was ready to accept it, but the Dublin manager was so averse to losing him that he prevailed upon the Lord-Lieutenant to issue an order to prevent him leaving the country. Wilks, however, being warned in time, contrived to effect his escape, and re-appeared at Drury Lane in 1799 as Palamede in Dryden's "*Marriage à la Mode*." Cibber considered him at this time inferior to Powel

in the part, and as showing rawness, but acknowledges that he soon made up for all deficiencies.

His study was so minute and exact that it is said that in the course of forty years he never changed or misplaced an article in one of his parts; and this, no matter how bad it might be. "I have been astonished," says his colleague, "to see him swallow a volume of froth and insipidity, in a new play, that we were sure could not live three days." In some new comedy he happened to complain of a crabbed speech in his part, which he said gave him more trouble to study than all the rest of it had done, upon which he applied to the author either to soften or shorten it. The author cut it out altogether. But when he returned home from the rehearsal, Wilks considered it such an indignity to his memory, that anything should be thought too hard for it, that he actually made himself perfect in that speech, though he knew it was never to be made use of. Indeed Wilks' excellence was entirely the result of unremitting study, for nature had given him a harsh and inharmonious voice, and he does not appear to have had much of that intuitive aptitude for his profession which distinguished such born actors as Betterton, Garrick, Kean. Yet by mere industry he succeeded in superseding a man, George Powel, who, although possessed of the highest natural gifts, wasted them and his life in idle dissipation.

Wilks was the original representative of all the fine gentlemen of Cibber's comedies, of Don Felix in "The Wonder," and of nearly all Farquhar's heroes—Mirable, Plume, Archer, and Sir Harry Wildair, most famous of all his parts, which put the town in ecstasies, and nightly crammed the theatre to the ceiling. He became so identified with this character, that it was said, whatever he acted, the vulgar spectators turned their thoughts upon Sir Harry. He was the most mercurial of comedians, indeed, Cibber says, that his vivacity was sometimes too violent. "But whatever he did upon the stage, let it be ever so trifling, whether it consisted in putting on his gloves, or taking out his watch, lolling on his cane, or taking snuff, every movement was marked by such an ease of breeding and manner, everything told so strongly the involuntary motion of a gentleman, that it was impossible to consider the character he represented in any other light than that of reality." In the lighter parts of tragedy he was almost equally eminent. Steele said of him, "to beseech gracefully, to approach respectfully, to pity, to mourn, to love, are the places wherein Wilks may be said to shine with the utmost beauty." His Hamlet was a fine performance, which was lovingly remembered even after Garrick's great success in the part; his Prince Hal was unequalled. Chetwood says no actor he had ever seen was equal to Wilks in the expression of manly

sorrow. He was the finest Macduff of his day, and never failed to draw the tears of the audience in his heart-broken lament over the fate of his wife and children.

Speaking of his private character, Cibber complains that his temper was so violent and overbearing, that several actors, upon the opening of the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, left them and went over to Rich; and that Dogget afterwards confessed to him that his secession from the partnership was really on that account. Yet he confesses, that to his diligence and impatience of neglect, was due that strict discipline which was one of the secrets of their success. "Had I had half his application," says the old actor, "I still think I might have shown myself twice the actor that in my highest state of favour I appeared to be."

He died in 1732, at the age of seventy-six. He was buried in that actor's Pantheon, St. Paul's Covent Garden,* at *midnight*, by his own request, to avoid all ostentation. But the choir of the King's Chapel came voluntarily, and performed an anthem.

Cibber's sketch of the triumvirate in their managerial capacity, gives us a vivid picture of their opposite characters. "At this time we were all in the vigour of our capacities as actors; and our prosperity enabled us to pay, at least, double the salaries to what the same actors had usually

* See Appendix B.

received, or could have hoped under the patentees. Dogget, who was naturally an economist, kept our expenses and accounts, to the best of his power, within regulated bounds and moderation. Wilks, who had a stronger passion for glory than lucre, was a little too apt to be lavish, in what was not always as necessary for the profit, as the honour of the theatre, for example, at the beginning of almost every season, he would order two, or three, suits to be made, or refreshed for actors of moderate consequence, that his having constantly a new one for himself, might seem less particular, though he had as yet no new part for it. This expeditious care of doing us good, without waiting for our consent to it, Dogget always looked upon, with the eye of a man in pain. But I, who hated pain, (though I as little liked the favour as Dogget himself), rather chose to laugh at the circumstance, than complain of what I knew was not to be cured, but by a remedy, worse than the evil. Upon these occasions, therefore, whenever I saw him, and his followers so prettily dressed out, for an old play, I only commended his fancy, or at most but whispered him not to give himself so much trouble, about others, upon whose performance it would but be thrown away. To which, with a smiling air of triumph over my want of penetration, he has replied, "Why, now, that was what I really did it for, to show others that I love to take care of them as

well as of myself." Thus, whenever he made himself easy he had not the least conception, let the expense be what it would, that we could possibly dislike it. And from the same principle, provided a thinner audience were liberal of their applause, he gave himself little concern about the receipts of it. As in these different tempers of my brother managers, there might be equally something right and wrong, it was equally my business to keep well with them both; and though of the two, I was rather inclined to Dogget's way of thinking, yet I was always under the disagreeable restraint of not letting Wilks see it; therefore, when in any material points of management they were ready to come to a rupture, I found it advisable to think neither of them absolutely in the wrong; but by giving to one as much of the right, of his opinion in this way, as I took from the other in that, their differences were sometimes softened into concessions, that I have reason to think prevented many ill consequences, in our affairs, that otherwise might have attended them." If many a great political state were managed by such excellent statesmanship as the actor here discourses, there would be better government and fewer wars in the world.

"However," he continues, "there were some points in which we were always unanimous. In the twenty years, while we were our own directors, we never had a creditor that had occasion to come

twice for his bill; every Monday morning discharged us of all demands before we took a shilling for our own use. And from this time we neither asked any actor, nor were desired by them, to sign any written agreement (to the best of my memory) whatsoever. The rate of their respective salaries were only entered in our daily pay-roll; which plain record every one looked upon as good as city security." The very diversity of tastes in the three managers prevented them jarring. Dogget's passion was money. Wilks was entirely absorbed in the stage. Cibber desired to be a rake and a man of fashion, was a member of White's, and was always to be seen in the company of lords.

But if he was a toady, Colley was not an obsequious one. He had a prejudice against Elrington, afterwards a very fine actor, when a young man, and would not advance him. A nobleman undertook to plead his cause and solicit for him a certain part he had a great desire to play. "My lord," answered Cibber, "it is not with us as with you; your lordship is sensible that there is no difficulty in filling places at Court; you cannot be at a loss for persons to act their part there. But I assure you it is quite otherwise in our theatrical world: if we should invest people with characters who are incapable to support them we should be undone." Cibber had a great passion for the gaming-table, and frequently lost heavily, and this

and his gay style of living often interfered with his professional duties, and sometimes he would go on the stage imperfect in his oldest parts. Davies had seen him lose himself in Sir Courtly Nice, and supply the deficiencies of memory by an elaborate bow, a long drawled-out "Your servant, madam." Then, deliberately inhaling a pinch of snuff, strut across the stage and whisper to the prompter, "What is next?"

In "The Laureat," published during a quarrel between him and Wilks, he is accused of envy, idleness, neglect, and tyrannical behaviour to inferiors. "Did you not," says the writer, "hurt the theatrical affairs by your avarice and ill-conduct? Did you not by your general misbehaviour towards authors and actors bring an odium on your brother managers as well as yourself? I have been assured no person who ever had any power on the stage was ever so universally odious to the actors as yourself." He was particularly merciless to young authors. He called it "the choking of singing birds." There is a story told of one bringing him a play to read. He knocked at the manager's door, and scarcely venturing to step beyond the threshold, placed a roll of manuscript in his hand, asking him to read it and give his opinion. Colley turned over the first leaf, read two lines, and gave it back to him with an "It won't do, Sir;" and then went away

to a coffee-house to tell the anecdote and laugh over the unfortunate man's discomfiture. Yet we have record of only one work of real merit rejected by him—Fenton's "*Mariamne*," the subject of the anecdote just related, and which made a great success at the opposition house. Here is an amusing picture from "*The Laureat*" of Cibber presiding in judgment upon new plays :

"The court sitting, Chancellor Cibber (for the other two, Wilks and Dogget, like Masters in Chancery, sat only for form sake, and did not presume to judge) nodded to the author to open his manuscript. The author begins to read, in which, if he failed to please the corrector, he would sometimes condescend to read it for him. If the play struck him warmly, as it would if he found anything new in it, and he thought he could particularly shine as an actor, he would then lay down his pipe (for the Chancellor always smoked when he made a decree), and cry, 'By G—— there is something in this, I do not know but it may do; I will play such a part.' When the reading was finished, he sometimes made his proper corrections, and sometimes without any propriety." Upon all sides we hear of his envious disposition. Gildon says: "He is always repining at the success of others, and upon the stage is always making his fellow-actors uneasy." Such a disposition, in that pugnacious age, it might be supposed, would get him into serious

scrapes, but with Colley discretion was the better part of valour. "Of all the comedians who have appeared upon the stage in my memory," writes Chesterfield in "Common Sense," "no one has taken a kicking with such humour as our excellent Laureate."

In 1713, an important change took place in the triumvirate, by the secession of one of its members and the admission of another, which brings us to Betterton's celebrated successor in tragedy—BARTON BOOTH. He was a gentleman by birth, and related to the Earls of Warrington, whose family name he bore. He was intended for the church, but when a boy at Westminster won such applause from his schoolfellows as Pamphilus in Terence's "Andria," that from that time his thoughts were turned from the pulpit to its supposed antipodean profession, the stage. At seventeen he ran away from home, joined a strolling company in the eastern counties, and even played at Bartholomew Fair; then he contrived to obtain an appearance at Dublin, and played Oronooko, under difficulties. On the first night, the weather being warm, forgetful of his black face, he wiped off the perspiration and appeared in the last act like a half-washed chimney-sweep, amidst roars of laughter. The next night a lady fixed some crape over his features, but, in the energy of acting, a part of it slipped off, so that he looked like a magpie. "When I came off,"

he said, "they so lampblackd me for the rest of the night that I was flayed before it could be got off again." Upon returning to London in 1701, he too, like Wilks, made his appeal to the great father of the stage, Betterton, armed with a letter of introduction from Lord Fitzhardinge. It would appear that the old actor gave him lessons, and he made his *début* in the same year at Lincoln's Inn Fields in Rochester's play of "Valentinian," with his tutor and Mrs. Barry. Even beside those grand artists he created an excellent impression. Cibber tells us that he confessed to him he "had been for some time too frank a lover of the bottle, but having had the happiness to observe into what contempt and distress Powel had plunged himself by the same vice, he was so struck by the terror of his example that he fixed a resolution (which from that time to the end of his days he strictly observed) of utterly reforming it." One of his early successes was the Ghost to Betterton's Hamlet, in which he was so solemn, so pathetic, and so majestic that he almost shared the honours with the great master. "The Ghost," says Davies, "though not meanly represented since the time of Booth, has never been equal to the action of that comedian. His slow, solemn, and undertone of voice, his noiseless tread, as if he had been composed of air, and his whole deportment, inspired the audience with that feeling which is excited by

awful astonishment! The impression of his appearance in this part was so powerful upon a constant frequenter of the theatres for nearly sixty years, that he assured me, when long after Booth's death he was present at the tragedy of 'Hamlet,' as soon as the name of the Ghost was announced on the stage he felt a kind of awe and terror, 'of which,' said he, 'I was soon cured by his appearance.'"

But while the great actor of the Restoration survived, even with failing powers, all others remained second in public estimation, and it was not until the production in 1712 of Ambrose Philip's "Distressed Mother," an adaptation of Racine's "Andromaque," that Booth, in the character of Pyrrhus, rose to the first rank of his profession. In the next year a greater triumph awaited him in Addison's "Cato." It would seem that the managers did not fully perceive the capabilities of this part; Wilks was even doubtful that Booth, being a young man, would consent to appear as so venerable a personage, and took the part himself to his lodgings to meet any objections he might make, and persuade and coax him into accepting it. But a very casual glance at the manuscript revealed to our tragedian what a grand chance was within his grasp. He kept the knowledge to himself, however, was cold and indifferent over the matter, and pretended that he took the part simply to

oblige. The play had been much talked about, and on the first night the house was crowded with all the greatest men of the Whig and Tory party. The pompous declamations on liberty were applauded to the echo by both sides, each appropriating those sentiments to its own views. It was its peculiar political significance that rendered this cold, turgid play, so destitute of all human passion and reality, a success; but we must not forget Booth's acting. His delineation of the noble Roman must, indeed, have been a magnificent performance, although of a style that would scarcely be acceptable now. Lord Bolingbroke was so delighted with it that on the first night he presented him with one hundred guineas, from himself and the gentlemen who were with him in his box. This gift led to another of equal value, for Dogget, who, as it has been before said, was a furious Whig, was so annoyed at this Tory presentation that he prevailed with his colleagues to bestow upon our tragedian a similar sum out of the treasury, because he could not bear that so redoubted a champion of liberty as Cato should be bought off to the cause of an opposite party. Booth did well by these political jealousies. For thirty-five nights "Cato" crammed Drury Lane to the ceiling. At the end of the season the company went to Oxford, as was a frequent custom. "On the first day of our acting it," says Cibber, "our house was in a manner invested, and entrance

demanded at twelve o'clock at noon, and before one it was not wide enough for many, who came too late for places. The same crowds continued for three days together." That year the three managers cleared fifteen hundred pounds each.

It was now suggested by Bolingbroke that the actor who had made a success unequalled since the days of Betterton, should be admitted to a share of the patent. Dogget violently opposed the proposition, upon political and commercial grounds; he could no more endure the thought of yielding to the dictation of a Tory lord than he could of admitting another to a share of his gains. Wilks and Cibber were equally averse upon the latter as well as upon other grounds. When they with other actors quitted Drury Lane and went over to the Haymarket, Booth, who was then only a tyro, chose to remain with Rich. "This," says Cibber, "his separation from our interests, when our all was at stake, afterwards kept his advancement to a share with us, in our more successful days, longer postponed than it otherwise it might probably have been." This again, however, he lays at Wilks' door; Sir Harry Wildair was jealous of the rising actor, and Booth thought he would make greater advancement out of his company. When, at length, the silencing of the patent obliged him to rejoin his old associates, he experienced the effects of this jealousy. Wilks gave Pierre and

Macbeth to Mills, a useful but certainly an inferior actor, and deprived the young player of one part at least he would have excelled in, giving him Banquo instead, and Lennox to George Powel, in order that his Macduff might stand forth more prominently.

To keep Booth fully employed and to prevent him meeting his aristocratic friends, especially Bolingbroke, who was interceding with royalty in his favour, they cast him to play every evening; but the ruse did not succeed, for each night after the performance the carriage and six of some lord was waiting at the stage door to whirl him off to Windsor, where he would remain at some noble house all the next day, and be brought back by the same mode of conveyance in time for his professional duties. Two of the managers gave way at last; but Dogget still held out, ultimately withdrawing from the management, and commencing a law-suit against his late partners. Booth paid six hundred pounds for his share of the stock property of the theatre; while the Court awarded Dogget a similar sum for his interest in the establishment. After his secession, he appeared only once again upon the stage, for Mrs. Porter's benefit, April 1st, 1718.

A few years after the death of his first wife, who was the daughter of a Norfolk baronet, Booth married the celebrated dancer, MISS SANTLOW, whose beauty

and poetry of motion had enslaved the hearts of half the men of the day, including the Duke of Marlborough. After marriage, the lady quitted the ballet for the drama, and appeared as Dorcas Zeal in Shadwell's "Fair Quaker of Deal," at Drury Lane, as before mentioned, Booth being the Captain Worthy. The part admirably suited her. "The gentle softness of her voice," says Cibber, "the composed innocence of her aspect, the modesty of her dress, the reserved decency of her gesture, and the simplicity of the natural sentiments that fell from her, made her seem the amiable maid she represented." And she it was who made the success of the piece. The union was a happy one, it would seem, but not of long duration. At forty, Booth's health began to give way beneath the gay life he led in company with his aristocratic friends, and, after one or two severe attacks of illness, which compelled a temporary retirement, he finally quitted the stage at the early age of forty-six. A quack undertook to cure him by administering at different times nearly two pounds of crude mercury, after surviving which he was, according to the Sangradian pharmacopœia of the time, bled, plastered, blistered to death. This was in 1733.

He lies buried in Cowley Church, near Uxbridge, in which neighbourhood he owned an estate. Booth Street, Westminster, was built by and named after

him. But for his wife's fortune he would have died a poor man. He stated in his will that all he was then possessed of did not amount to two-thirds of the money his marriage had brought him; that remnant was entirely left to its rightful owner, to whose generous disposition he pays high tribute by setting forth how he had bestowed £1300 upon his sisters and £400 upon his brother out of "her substance," and at her earnest solicitation, which generosity had been returned, as is usual in such cases, with the basest ingratitude. Like his great master, Booth owed little to Nature, his figure being rather short, his face round and red. His range of characters was not so varied as that of Hart or Betterton, and he was undoubtedly inferior to both. Theophilus Cibber is the only one who allows him to have had any talent for comedy.

Aaron Hill, in a letter to Victor, has given us an excellent idea of his abilities. "He had learning to understand whatever it was his part to speak, and judgment to know how far it agreed or disagreed with his character. It was this actor's peculiar felicity to be heard and seen the same, whether as the pleased, the grieved, the pitying, the reproachful, or the angry. One would be almost tempted to borrow the aid of a very bold figure, and to express this excellency more significantly, by permission to affirm that the blind might

have seen him in his voice, and the deaf have heard him in his visage." "His voice," adds Victor, "was completely harmonious, from the softness of the flute to the extent of the trumpet." Theophilus Cibber highly praises his King Lear. "Never did pity or terror more vehemently possess an audience than by his judicious and powerful execution of that part. . . . In Othello, the heart-breaking anguish of his jealousy would have drawn tears from the most obdurate, yet in his grief he neither whined nor blubbered, in his rage he neither mouthed nor ranted."

Henry VIII. was another of his great impersonations. "Hans Holbein," says Victor, "never gave a higher picture of King Henry than did the actor in his representation. When angry, his eye spoke majestic terror; the noblest and bravest of his courtiers were awestruck. He gave you the fullest idea of that arbitrary prince, who thought himself born to be obeyed; the boldest dare not dispute his commands, he appeared to claim a right divine to exert the power he imperiously assumed." Pope, however, calls him "well mouth'd Booth," which is suggestive of a style of acting *caviare* to our modern ideas; he was certainly an imitator of Betterton, and therefore the remarks upon the master will apply with double force to the disciple. He had a very exalted idea of his profession. "The longest life," he said,

"is too short for the almost endless study of the actor."

To return to Cibber.

He was still diligently producing plays, good, bad, and indifferent; of some, only the names survive: "The Double Gallant" and "The Lady's Last Stake" (1707-8) were the best that appeared before the celebrated "Nonjuror" (1718), upon which Bickerstaff afterwards founded "The Hypocrite." It was a clever adaption of Molière's "Tartuffe," applied as a satire to the Jacobite faction. The Whigs were delighted; the King sent the author two hundred pounds, and Lintot, the bookseller, gave him one hundred for the copy-right. If it made him friends among the Whigs, it created him enemies among the Tories, and confirmed that virulence which Pope manifested against him during so many years. But the hatred of the great satirist began with a more personal cause. A few months before the appearance of "The Nonjuror," he had, conjointly with Gay, written a farce entitled "Three Hours after Marriage." The piece was damned in consequence of an extravagant situation in the last act, in which the lovers insert themselves, one into a mummy's, the other into a crocodile's, skin. A short time afterwards Cibber, while playing Bayes in "The Rehearsal," made a satirical allusion to these incidents, probably because he saw Pope in front. Trembling with

passion, the poet came behind the scenes and with a torrent of abuse demanded that the allusion should not be repeated. So far from yielding, Cibber vowed he would repeat the jest every time he played the part. This was the beginning of the famous quarrel, which culminated in the actor being made the hero of "The Dunciad." Pope did not come best out of the affray; the moderation and dignity of Cibber's first "Letter to Mr. Pope" are admirable. He made no attempt to depreciate the genius of his foe; on the contrary, he sincerely praised it. His second, in which he promulgated a ludicrous and indecent story against him, although less commendable, yet fought him with his own foul weapons, and made him writhe with agony. "Cibber did not obtrude himself upon the contest," says D'Israeli ("Quarrels of Authors"). Had he been merely a poor vain creature, he had not preserved so long a silence. . . . He triumphed by that singular felicity of character, that inimitable *gaieté de cœur*, that honest simplicity of truth, from which flowed so warm an admiration of the genius of his adversary, and that exquisite tact in the characters of men which carried down this child of airy humour to the verge of his ninetieth year, with all the enjoyment of strong animal spirits, and all that innocent egotism which became frequently a source of his own raillery."

In 1728 Cibber completed and produced Van-

brugh's posthumous and unfinished comedy of "A Journey to London," as "The Provoked Husband." A hostile audience assembled on the first night to hiss Cibber's portion of the work, and applaud Sir John's; they never doubted their ability to detect which was which. But what was intended to be a bitter mortification proved an immense triumph. He afterwards printed Vanbrugh's fragment, and showed his enemies that the scenes which they had loudly applauded were his, notably the fine one in the last act, the reconciliation between Lord and Lady Townley, while those of the Wronghead family, which they had so violently condemned, were the work of his *collaborateur*. "The Provoked Husband" is an admirable work, which kept the stage until within the last thirty years, and some of the best writing in it is Cibber's.

It was in 1730 that the office of Poet Laureate was bestowed upon him—why, must ever remain an impenetrable mystery. "As an actor," says a contemporary, "he had undoubted merits; as a dramatic writer his character was both good and bad; as Laureate, he was unquestionably the worst that ever was." His verses, which appeared year after year in the magazines, were turned into ridicule, and were the amusement of the town. He would sit in an obscure corner at the coffee-houses, and listen to the abuse and ridicule heaped upon them, and frequently join in the laugh.

Whether he really set no value upon his poetry and was indifferent to its condemnation, or whether he put on a cheerful countenance only to disarm and mortify malice, cannot be known.

One by one the actors of his youth dropped off, and in 1733 he sold his share of the patent and retired from the stage. Yet he continued for several years to appear at intervals in his favourite parts, and the estimation in which he was held is proved by the fact that he was paid fifty guineas for each of these performances. In 1745 he produced his last dramatic work, "Papal Tyranny," an alteration of Shakespeare's "King John," à propos of the Scotch Rebellion. It provoked a storm of disapprobation. He himself played Pandulpho, in whose mouth he had placed a number of ranting fustian speeches. Davies thus describes the performance: "His pipe was ever powerless, and now, through old age, so weak that his words were rendered inarticulate. His manner of speaking was much applauded by some, and by others as greatly disliked, in the Pope's Legate, as in most of his tragic characters. The unnatural swelling of his words displeased all who preferred natural elocution to artificial cadence. . . . But Colley's deportment was, I think, as disgusting as his utterance. He affected a stately, magnificent tread, a supercilious aspect, with lofty and extravagant action, which he displayed by waving up and down

a roll of parchment in his right hand; in short, his whole behaviour was so starchly studied, that it appeared eminently insignificant, and more resembling his own Lord Foppington than a dignified churchman."

To the end he continued to be the old beau; the man about town, airy, gay, sarcastic as ever. The actors of his youth continued to be his ideals of histrionic excellence; next to those in his esteem were the performers of his maturity; but he could see no talent in the rising men and women of his old age. It was with difficulty that he could be brought to acknowledge that Garrick was "clever."

He died in 1757 at his house in Berkeley Square, at the age of eighty-six, and was buried in the Abbey.

Cibber's powers as an actor lay entirely in comic characters. In these he was surpassingly fine. "When he represented a ridiculous humour," says a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "he had a mouth in every nerve, and became eloquent without speaking; his attitudes were pointed and exquisite; his expression was stronger than painting; he was beautifully absorbed by the character, and demanded and monopolised attention; his very extravagances were coloured by propriety." Dibdin, in his "History of the Stage," remarks: "To him obstacles were incentives. Nature even, according to his own account, had denied him almost every

theatrical requisite, yet he found a substitute for all, and made study, perfectness, and judgment arrest as much the attention of the public as others did truth, elegance, and nature." One of his most famous performances was Justice Shallow, of which Davies says: "His manner was perfectly simple, his look so vacant when he questioned his cousin Silence about the price of ewes, and lamented in the same breath, with silly surprise, the death of Old Double, that it will be impossible for any surviving spectator not to smile at the remembrance of it. The want of ideas occasions Shallow to repeat almost everything he says. Cibber's transition from asking the price of bullocks to trite, but grave reflections on mortality, was so natural, and attended with such an unmeaning roll of his small pig's-eyes, accompanied with such an important utterance of "tick, tick, tick," not much louder than the balance of a watch, or a pendulum, that I question if any actor was ever superior in the conception and expression of solemn misgiving."

But like all great comic actors he had a violent *penchant* for tragedy, and persisted in playing Richard—even after Garrick—Wolsey, Iago, &c. In the former, his harsh, cracked voice in the more passionate scenes excited derisive laughter; in Wolsey, Davies says, "his pride and passion were almost farcical;" in Iago he was once hissed off the stage. In Thomson's "Sophonisba" he was re-

ceived with such disapprobation that he was obliged to relinquish the character to another and inferior actor : the audience signified their appreciation of the change by giving the latter a rapturous reception.

His principal plays have been already referred to in these pages, but one merit has yet to be mentioned ; they were among the first that, profiting by the censures of Jeremy Collier, returned to the path of decorousness and decency, and commenced the reaction against the licentious comedies of the Restoration. His "Apology," of which I have given the reader a taste, written soon after his retirement, is the finest theatrical book in the language ; it is a complete history of the English stage for forty years. It is also full of shrewd and clever remarks upon the dramatic art, applicable to any period, and might be as truly a text-book to the actors of the present day as it was to those of his own.

THEOPHILUS CIBBER is a name almost as familiar to us as Colley Cibber. At eighteen he made the stage his profession, and thanks to his father's interest was quickly thrust into public notice. Colley's defects of voice and person were exaggerated in him, and although he had some merit he was prone to grimace and extravagance, which although very well adapted for his famous impersonation of Ancient Pistol, by which name he was generally known, marred every other character he

represented. As a man he was in every respect contemptible and vile, a spendthrift, a cheat, and a miserable pander. We shall meet him again by and bye. Of this period was PINKETHMAN, a celebrated speaking harlequin and comedian. BOMAN who lived to be eighty-eight, and used to boast in the first George's time that he had often drunk a bottle with King Charles. JOE MILLER, whom we are told could neither read nor write, took to himself a wife only for the purpose of having his parts read to him. According to Peake, (in his "Life of Colman)," although a good actor, he was so excessively dull and stupid that it was considered a capital jest to impute all the good stories and witty sayings to him. The book that goes by his name is supposed to have been the compilation of John Motley, the dramatist, a contemporary.

There were few comic actors of this period greater favourites than Norris, better known as "JUBILEE DICKY" from a part in which he made himself famous, in Farquhar's "Constant Couple." He had a little formal figure, and a voice so singular, that it was said if he came into a Coffee-House and only called "Waiter !" the gravest person could not forbear smiling.

A promising young actor, who might have done great things was HILDEBRAND HORDEN, the son of Dr. Horden, Minister of Twickenham; he was killed in a brawl at the Rose Tavern, with

one Colonel Burgess, who was arraigned for the murder, but acquitted. "This young man," says Cibber, "had almost every natural gift that could promise an excellent actor." He was much sought after in society, and his handsome person rendered him a great favourite among the ladies, and for two or three days together, while he lay dead, several came in their carriages to see him in his shroud. But for his death Wilks might not have been sent for from Dublin."

But while I am growing tedious over these men, some very delightful women are waiting to make their appearance. Precedence must be given to Mrs. Bracegirdle's successor, beautiful ANNE OLDFIELD. Her father had been an officer in the Guards under James the Second. She was living with her aunt, who kept the Mitre Tavern in St. James's Market, when one day Farquhar, who frequented the house, overheard her reading, behind the bar, Beaumont and Fletcher's "Scornful Lady," and was so struck by the propriety of her emphasis and the happy manner in which she distinguished each personage, the animation of her countenance, and the beauty of her face and figure, that he obtruded himself upon the family party to heartily applaud, and tell her what an admirable actress she would make. The next time Vanbrugh came to the house her mother told him what Farquhar had said, and he gave her an introduction to Rich, who, upon this

recommendation, engaged her at fifteen shillings a week. This was in 1699, when she was not more than sixteen years of age. "She remained," says Cibber, "about a twelvemonth almost a mute, and unheeded, till Sir John Vanbrugh gave her the part of Alinda in 'The Pilgrim.'" But the old critic confesses he could see nothing in her at this time beyond a pleasing person and a silvery-toned voice, and that her mode of speaking was formal, plain, flat. In 1703, when Mrs. Mountfort, (then Mrs. Verbruggen) died, there was a struggle for her parts. One, Leonora, in "Sir Courtly Nice," fell to Mrs. Oldfield. Cibber, who played the hero, was so displeased with the cast that it was with difficulty she could prevail upon him to rehearse his scenes with her. "However," he says, "we ran them over, with a mutual inadvertency of one another. I seemed careless, as concluding that any assistance I could give her would be to little or no purpose; and she muttered out her words in a sort of misty manner, at my low opinion of her. When the play came to be acted, she had just occasion to triumph over the error of my judgment, by the almost amazement that her unexpected performance awaked me to; so forward and sudden a step into nature I had never seen; and what made her performance more valuable was, that I knew it all proceeded from her own understanding, untaught, unassisted by any more experienced actor. . . . Upon this un-

expected sally, then, of the power and disposition of so unforeseen an actress, it was, that I again took up the two first acts of 'The Careless Husband,' which I had written the summer before, and had thrown aside in despair of having justice done to the character of Lady Betty Modish by any woman then among us." The comedy was produced in 1704, and the public heartily endorsed Cibber's judgment. So perfect a woman of fashion had never yet been seen upon the stage, and the author attributes the success of the play greatly to her consummate acting. "After her success in this character of high life," he says, "all that Nature had given her of the actress, seemed to have risen to its full perfection; but the variety of her power could not be known till she was seen in as great variety of characters; which as fast as they fell to her, she excelled in. Authors had much more from her performance, than they had even to hope for from what they had written for her. I have often seen her," he adds, "in private societies, where women of the best rank might have borrowed some part of her behaviour, without the least diminution of their sense or dignity. In the wearing of her person she was particularly fortunate; her figure was always improving to her thirty-sixth year; but her excellence in acting was never at a stand; and the last new character she shone in (Lady Townley) was a proof that she was still able to do more, if more

could have been done for her." Her last original part was Thomson's Sophonisba. The poet, speaking of her afterwards, said, "she excelled what even in the fondness of an author I could wish or imagine." Could there be greater praise? Cibber tells us that her modesty equalled her ability, and that she never undertook a new part without being "importunately desirous" of all the help others could give her, and that she was far less presuming in her station than many of half her pretensions.

At one time she believed herself to be unfit for tragedy, and would say, "Oh, give those parts to Porter, she can put on a tragedy face better than I can." Yet in several tragic parts, especially Calista, she is said to have been inimitable. She was the original Jane Shore, (1714). "Her excellent clear voice of passion," writes Chetwood, "her piercing, flaming eye, with manner and action suiting, used to make me shrink with awe."

Although by no means an immaculate person, Mrs. Oldfield was received on terms of the closest intimacy by ladies in the best society. She kept house with a gentleman named Maynwaring, until his death, after which she accepted the same position to General Churchill, and by the world was regarded almost in the light of an honest wife, which she was in all but name. "I hear you and the General are married," said Queen Caroline to her one day. "Madam," she replied, "the General keeps his own

secrets." She died in 1730. "As the nicety of dress was her delight when living," says a biographer, "she was as nicely dressed after her decease, being, by Mrs. Saunders' direction, thus laid in her coffin; she had on a *very fine Brussels lace head*; a Holland shift, with tucker and double ruffles of the same lace; a pair of new kid gloves, and her body wrapped up in a winding-sheet." Pope has satirised this description in his "Moral Essays." She was laid in state in the Jerusalem Chamber, and nobles supported her pall. She is buried in the Cloisters of Westminster. Her children married into the houses of Cadogan and Anglesea, and the Lords Clarence and Alfred Paget are her great-great-grandchildren.

As Mrs. Oldfield was the successor of Mrs. Bracegirdle, so did Mrs. Barry's mantle fall upon the shoulders of MRS. PORTER, who had been in the habit of playing secondary parts to her, and had studied her style of acting. Betterton saw her act as a child, the genius of Britain, in a Lord Mayor's pageant in the reign of Charles, or James the Second, and took her under his tuition. She was so small at the time that he used to threaten if she did not do as he told her, he would put her into a fruit-woman's basket who stood in the pit, and cover her with a vine-leaf. Very little is known of her private life, but she was always a welcome guest among the best and most respectable families of London. She lived at Heywood Hill, near Hendon.

One summer's night in 1731 she was stopped in her chaise by a highwayman. With all the courage of a stage heroine, her answer to his demand for money was to present a pistol, of which she always carried a brace, at his head. Upon which the man assured her that necessity, and not choice, made of him a thief, to relieve the wants of a starving family. So moved was she by his piteous story, that she voluntarily handed him her purse. When he rode away, being very excited, she gave her horse a sharp cut with the whip, he started forward, threw her out of the carriage, and in falling she dislocated her thigh. Yet, notwithstanding his being the cause of this accident, which lamed her for the rest of her life, she made it her business to inquire into the truth of the fellow's assertions, and upon finding them to be true raised sixty pounds for him among her friends. In person she was tall, well-shaped, with fair hair and complexion, but not handsome. Her voice was naturally harsh and unpleasing, with a disagreeable tremor, to overcome the effect of which she spoke with a kind of modulated cadence, that, together with a lack of vivacity, rendered her unsuccessful in comedy. But her dignified deportment, her graceful ease, her passion and enthusiasm, rendered her a tragedy queen *par excellence*. Strange to say, Cibber is wholly silent upon her abilities, but Davies tells us that "she concealed the art of her

profession so skilfully that she seemed to realise the passion and to be inspired with the various situations of the characters. There was an elevated consequence in the manner of that actress which since her time I have in vain sought for in her successors. The dignity and grace of a queen were never, perhaps, more happily set off than by Mrs. Porter." Dr. Johnson told Mrs. Siddons that in the vehemence of tragic rage he had never seen her equalled. She was especially fine in regal characters, in Queen Katherine and Queen Elizabeth ("The Unhappy Favourite"). One night, when she was playing the latter, Queen Anne, who was seated in a stage box, dropped her fan upon the stage. Thoroughly possessed by the part she was representing, Mrs. Porter pointed to it, and, addressing one of her attendants in a tone of imperial dignity, said, "Take up our sister's fan." Her Majesty smiled good-humouredly, and there was a loud burst of applause from the audience, while the actress, aroused by these sounds to the reality of the situation, stood overwhelmed with confusion at her temerity. Her first appearance in London, according to Geneste, was at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in 1699; and her last appearance was at Covent Garden in the season of 1741-2. She was the original Alaminta, in the "Confederacy," Hermione, in "The Distressed Mother," Alicia, in "Jane Shore," Leonora, in "The Revenge," &c. Peculiar

niarily Mrs. Porter was not among the fortunate ones, and seems to have lived during her last years upon the benevolence of Lord Cornbury. She died in 1762 at a very advanced age.

As the old ones are departing, a whole bevy of young, and hereafter to be famous, actresses are springing up, but they belong rather to the Garrick period, for which I shall reserve them. I must not pass over one name, however, which disappeared before the dawning of that era—LAVINIA FENTON, the original Polly Peachem of Gay's "Beggar's Opera." She was the daughter of a naval lieutenant. She seems to have made an appearance at the little theatre in the Haymarket, in 1726, as Monimia; but her first regular engagement was with Rich, who gave her his usual salary of fifteen shillings a week, which after she had rendered herself the idol of the town in Polly, when her portrait, with laudatory verses, was in every shop window in London, he made thirty! The Duke of Bolton fell in love with her in the part, took her off the stage at the end of the season, and upon the death of his wife made her a duchess. Her contemporaries speak of her as beautiful and very accomplished, and as adorning by her wit and good sense the high rank to which she was raised.

CHAPTER VI.

JAMES QUIN.

Decline of the Stage—An Unfortunate Manager—The First English Harlequin and Inventor of Pantomimes—The Original Captain Macheath—Garrick's Prototype in Richard III.—The Romance of Quin's Parentage—His Success as Falstaff and Cato—His Artificial Style—His Picture in the Rosciad—At Leicester House—The "Mrs. Quins'"—His Duels—The Riot at Lincoln's Inn Fields—Anecdotes of his Wit and Benevolence.

FROM the deaths of Wilks and Booth, and the retirement of Cibber until the appearance of Garrick, there was an interregnum, during which, the theatre, being in the hands of unprincipled or mercenary men, wholly indifferent to art, fell from the high position to which the triumvirate had raised it to the lowest depth of degradation; while the actors, destitute of original genius, were the mere echoes of their great predecessors, reproducing the faults and mannerisms, the strut and pompous cadences of the artificial school of Betterton and Booth without those flashes of greatness which illumined its dulness.

In 1732, Highmore, a gentleman of means, gave Booth £2,500 for half his share, while Cibber sold his

whole share for £3000. After her husband's death, Mrs. Booth disposed of the remaining half for £1500. Mrs. Wilks retained hers. This Highmore, in partnership with Giffard, who had built the Goodman's Fields' Theatre, became possessed of two thirds of the patent. And a very bad bargain it proved to him. Taking advantage of a refusal of the management to increase the pay of the performers, Theophilus Cibber stirred up a revolt, and induced nearly all the principals to join him in opening the little theatre in the Haymarket, leaving to Highmore the mere dregs of the company. Colley, to his shame be it said, considering the large sum he had just pocketed from the manager, endeavoured to procure his roguish son a license, but failed. The deserters were ordered to return to Drury Lane within fourteen days, and one of them, Harper, a famous Falstaff, although a householder, was arrested under the Vagrancy Act; the theatre was closed and Theophilus came to grief, as he usually did in his rogueries. But the affair was Highmore's ruin, and he was soon glad to dispose of his shares to a wild young spendthrift of good family named Fleetwood, of whose management I shall have more to say by and bye.

Let us now take a glance at the other house. Christopher Rich died in 1714, just before the opening of the new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and his son John had succeeded him as

patentee. JOHN RICH, under the name of Lun, was the first and most famous of the English harlequins, and although something resembling that style of entertainment had been attempted as early as the year 1700, he might also be accredited as being the creator of pantomimes, "Harlequin Executed" produced by him in 1720, may be regarded as the first regular pantomime performed in this country. The Harlequin of Rich was a very different personage to the spangled nonentity of these degenerate days; he was the hero of the piece, and his love adventures with beautiful Columbine formed the plot; the clown was a very subordinate personage until the Grimaldi time. So fine was Rich's acting in dumb show, that he could draw as many tears as the most eloquent tragedian. He was an illiterate eccentric man who could not utter a line upon the stage, and yet believed that every success achieved in his theatre was owing to his instructions. We shall meet him frequently in the ensuing chapters, in situations where his eccentricities will be better developed than they could be by any description.

To return to the actors; MILLS, the original Zanga, in Young's "Revenge," and DELANE, two performers of the ponderous and mouthing school had succeeded to Booth's parts. WALKER was an admirable actor in juvenile tragedy and comedy, so fine in Hotspur and Faulconbridge, especially in the latter, that it was long ere his successor was found. Quin, by some

extraordinary perversion of judgment, was originally cast for the dashing highwayman, Macheath, in Gay's "Newgate Pastoral." He knew he could not play it, and hearing Walker humming one of the airs at rehearsal, he begged Gay to give him the part. Walker made in it almost as great a success as Lavinia Fenton did in Polly; but it was a fatal success for he was so much sought after in consequence, and fell into such excesses that he lived only a few years afterwards.

RYAN was a tragedian who might have risen above all his contemporaries, but for a peculiarity of delivery in consequence of a bullet hole in his cheek, which made him "whistle" his words, and a general slovenliness. Woodward told Tate Wilkinson that Garrick had borrowed some of his points in "Richard" from this actor. He and David went one night to see Ryan in the part prepared to ridicule the performance. "But Garrick was astonished at what he saw working in the mind of the ungraceful, slovenly, ill-dressed figure that Ryan made; which told him more than he knew before, and caused Garrick to bring to light, as his own, that unknown excellence which in Ryan had remained unnoticed and buried." Foote referred to this story in an occasional prologue he wrote and spoke for Ryan's farewell benefit.

"From him *succeeding Richards* took the clue;
And hence the style, if not the colour drew."

BOHEME who had been a sailor, flourished between 1718 and 1730; he was no imitator but a tragic actor of original powers, and excellent in several parts. He was the only Lear between Booth and Garrick.

But the most celebrated name of this era is the one which heads this chapter, JAMES QUIN. He was born in 1693 in King Street, Covent Garden. His mother had in early life been abandoned by her husband, and believing him to be dead had married again; but by-and-by the first husband returned, claimed her, and carried her off. James was the offspring of the second marriage. The Quins were a good Irish family, but the boy's birth being illegitimate, he was not likely to gain any advantage from them. He was educated for the law, had chambers in the Temple, but kept company with the players until he longed to become one of them. At the death of his father, finding himself without the means of pushing his way in his profession, he resolved to follow his inclinations, and take to the stage. Ryan introduced him at Drury Lane, where he was engaged for the season of 1717. One night "Tamerlane" was announced to be played; Mills, who was to perform Bajazet, was taken suddenly ill, and the management, after some persuasion, induced Quin, who had hitherto done little or nothing, to go on and read the part, an extremely difficult task for the most experienced actor; but he

succeeded so well that he drew down rounds of applause, and the next night, having studied the words, made a great success. Next season he passed over to Lincoln's Inn Fields. Rich was desirous of producing "The Merry Wives of Windsor," but could not find a Falstaff. Quin volunteered to undertake the part, but was contemptuously snubbed for his pains. "You attempt Falstaff!" cried Rich. "You might as well think of acting Cato after Booth. It is quite out of your walk, young man. Nobody has any idea of the part except myself. Never think of Falstaff." But the young man did think of Falstaff, and played it in 1720, and became the greatest since Betterton—so great that no man has ever yet succeeded to his mantle; and he thought of Cato too, and played it, was encored in the great soliloquy, and the audience rose at him and shouted, "Booth out-done!"

"Quin," says Tate Wilkinson, "with a bottle of claret and a full house, the instant he was on the stage was Sir John Falstaff himself. His comely countenance, his expressive eye, his happy swell of voice and natural importance of deportment, all united to make up a most characteristic piece of acting; and when detected in the lie, there was such a glow of feature and expression as will never be equalled." "I can only recommend a man who wants to see a character perfectly played," said

Foote, "to see Mr. Quin in the part of Falstaff; and if he does not express a desire of spending an evening with that merry mortal, why, I would not spend one with *him*, if he would pay my reckoning." Davies is somewhat colder in his praise. "Of this large compound of lies, bragging, and exhaustless fund of wit and humour, Quin possessed the ostensible or mechanical part in an eminent degree. In person he was tall and bulky, his voice strong and pleasing, his countenance manly, and his eye piercing and expressive. In scenes where satire and sarcasm were poignant he greatly excelled, particularly in the witty triumph over Bardolph's carbuncles, and the foolery of the hostess. In the whole part he was animated, though not equally happy. His supercilious look, in spite of assumed gaiety, sometimes unmasked the surliness of his disposition; however, he was, notwithstanding some faults, esteemed the most intelligent and judicious Falstaff since the days of Betterton."

But in other characters Quin never equalled the great masters of the art who had gone before him. Booth was his model, and he was the last of the Betterton school—a school which must have resembled that of Kemble, measured and artificial, modelled by an heroic rather than a natural standard, grand and beautiful when represented by its originator, but becoming more stagey, more mouthy, under each successive disciple. Booth

was inferior to Betterton, Quin to Booth. Quin especially imitated the latter in Henry VIII.; but Davies tells us he had not the strength and flexibility of voice of the original; he could not utter impetuous and vehement anger with vigour, nor deal tremendous looks; he was not graceful in action or deportment, nor had he that grandeur and magnificence with which his prototype invested the part. It is thus that a school of acting deteriorates through its imitators. Quin imitated Booth without the latter's charms of voice, grace, grandeur of action and power of passion; what then could have remained except the faults, the over-pompous and artificial utterance, passion degenerating into rant, dignity into strut? There was no inspiration in Quin's tragedy; he was dull, heavy, monotonous. His style is well illustrated in his delivery of a line from "The Fair Penitent." After Garrick, full of fire and impetuosity, had hurled his challenge at the head of Horatio, instead of taking it up with equal fierceness, Quin made a long pause, until one night a fellow in the gallery called out, "Why don't you give the gentleman an answer," then dragged out in a sepulchral voice, "I'll—meet—thee—there."

I shall reserve further contrast between the two actors for my chapter on Garrick.

Davies says again, "He was utterly unqualified for the striking and vigorous characters of tragedy;

he could neither express the tender nor the violent emotions of the heart, his action was generally forced or languid, and his movements ponderous and sluggish; but it must be confessed, he often gave true weight and dignity to sentiment by a well regulated tone of voice, judicious elocution and easy deportment; his Cato and Brutus were remembered with pleasure by those who wished to forget his Lear and Richard." The old critic adds "that in characters of singular humour, of dignified folly, of blunt and boisterous demeanour, of treacherous art, contemptuous spleen, and even pleasing gravity, he had no equal." Churchill, in the "Rosciad," gives a masterly picture of this actor.

"His eyes, in gloomy socket taught to roll,
Proclaim'd the sullen 'habit of his soul,'
Heavy and phlegmatic he trod the stage,
Too proud for tenderness, too dull for rage.
When Hector's lovely widow shines in tears,
Or Rowe's gay rake dependant virtue jeers,
With the same cast of features he is seen,
To chide the libertine, and court the queen.
From the tame scene which without passion flows,
With just desert his reputation rose;
Nor less he pleased, when on some surly plan,
He was at once the actor and the man.
In Brute he shone unequall'd: all agree
Garriek's not half so great a Brute as he.

* * * *

In whate'er cast his character was laid,
Self still, like oil upon the surface, play'd.
Nature, in spite of all his skill, crept in;
Horatio, Dorax, Falstaff—still 'twas Quin."

Here is a picture of him as Chamont in "The Orphan," at sixty years of age. "He was equipped in a long, grisly, half-powdered perriwig, hanging low down on each side the breast and down the back, a heavy scarlet coat and waistcoat trimmed with broad gold lace, black velvet breeches, a black silk neckcloth, black stockings, a pair of square toed shoes with an old-fashioned pair of stone buckles—and the youthful and fiery Chamont adorned himself with a pair of stiff, high-topped white gloves, with a broad old scolloped lace hat, which when taken off the head, and having pressed the old wig, and viewing his fair round belly with fat capon lined, he looked like Sir John Brute in the drunken scene."

Frederick Prince of Wales appointed him to instruct his children in elocution, and under his direction there were amateur performances at Leicester House, in which the young princes and princesses took part. When told how well George III. delivered his first speech, he exclaimed proudly, "Ah, it was I who taught the boy to speak." And the King did not forget his old master, for he placed him on the civil list.

For twenty years Quin was the despot of the stage. John Rich and every actor trembled before him, his word was law, and none dare gainsay it. By this time the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre was finally abandoned, and a new one erected in Covent

Garden, on the same spot on which the present building now stands. It was opened on the 7th of December, 1732, under the united patents of Killigrew and Davenant, John Rich being the manager.

After Booth's death, Quin had no rival more formidable than Delane, and alternately at old Drury and Covent Garden, continued to be the great actor of his day, until "little Davy" burst upon the town. Then began the battle between the old and the new school, which ultimately terminated in the defeat of the former. But the old actor came very well out of the fray, for in one year Rich paid him £1,000, the largest sum which had, until then, ever been given to any performer. In 1748 he retired to Bath in high dudgeon. "I am at Bath.—Yours, James Quin," he wrote to Rich. To which the other replied with like Spartan brevity: "Stay there and be d—d.—Yours, John Rich." His last appearance as a regular actor was on the 20th of May, 1751, as Horatio in the "Fair Penitent." But he returned to the stage in 1753 to play Falstaff, for the benefit of his old friend and companion, Ryan, as he had been in the habit of doing for several years. The gentry and nobility of Bath gave him one hundred guineas, and desired him to send them down tickets to that amount. He had accumulated a very respectable fortune, half of which he sank with the Duke of Bedford, and lived upon £200 a year. He continued to be honoured

and respected in the best society of Bath and London, and was a welcome guest at more than one ducal house. He was also a frequent visitor at Garrick's villa at Hampton. They made friends after his retirement, and Davy used to call him his butler, and send him into the cellar to hunt out bottles of choice wine, an errand very much to his taste. He died in 1765, and was buried in the Abbey Church, Bath, his old rival, Garrick, writing his epitaph.

His appearance was so distinguished, that at Court, it was said, he would have been taken for nothing less than a prime minister or an ambassador. His habits, to say the least, were eccentric. In his holidays he would make an expedition into the country in company with some lady, who became Mrs. Quin for the nonce; when his money was nearly all spent, he would return to London, give a farewell supper at the Bedford, make the lady a present, and then address her something in this fashion: "Madam, for our mutual convenience I have given you the name of Quin for this some time past. There is no reason for carrying on this farce here, and now, Madam, give me leave to un-Quin you, and restore you to your own name for the future."

Quin was famous not only as an actor, but as an epicure, a humourist, a duellist, and a man of benevolence. Two of his duels ended fatally. The

first took place at the very commencement of his career: there was a quarrel about stage business between him and an actor named Bowen; the latter proposed they should adjourn to a tavern and fight it out; taking a private room, Bowen locked the door and drew upon his companion with great ferocity; Quin simply stood upon his defence, but the other, pressing forward in hot haste, ran upon his sword and was mortally wounded. Quin was arrested, but the dying man, taking the blame entirely upon himself, procured his acquittal. His second affair of honour was with a choleric little Welsh actor named Williams, whose pronunciation of Cato, which he called Keeto, in the message "Cæsar sends health to Cato," drew forth from the tragedian the remark, "Would he had sent a better messenger!" Williams was furious, and demanded satisfaction; Quin laughed at him; but after the play the irate player lay in wait for him under the Covent Garden Piazza, insisted upon his fighting, and after a few passes lay a corpse upon the pavement. Quin was again arrested and again acquitted of blame. His third encounter was with Theophilus Cibber, in the same place, which was almost as notorious for such affairs as Hyde Park or the fields behind Montague House, and he might have robbed the fishes of that precious morsel had not some passers-by parted them. He was as ready with his sword to resent an insult,

or an injury, as any young hot-blooded noble. One night in 1721, a certain profligate Earl during the performance of *Macbeth*, deliberately crossed the stage in the murder scene to speak to a friend upon the opposite side. Very much enraged, Rich told him he should never be admitted behind the scenes again. My lord's answer was a blow in the face, which Rich instantly returned. In a moment the house was up in arms, the Earl's companions drew their swords and attacked the manager; Quin, Walker and Ryan ran to his assistance, and used their weapons so doughtily that their lordships were driven off the stage and out of the house. But they soon returned by the front entrance, and after smashing all within their reach would have fired the building had not Quin again come to the rescue, and, assisted by the constables, captured some of the ringleaders and dragged them off before the magistrates. Thereafter a guard of twelve soldiers and a sergeant was ordered to do duty at Lincoln's Inn as at Drury Lane.*

No man loved good eating and drinking better than James Quin. He once wished himself a mouth as

* It is stated in "Their Majesties' Servants" that this was the first time a guard was commanded to attend the theatres. This is an error, for in an order issued by Charles II. in 1665 commanding the public to pay at the first door, and forbidding money to be given back to any person unless they returned that way before the end of the first act, it is required of "*the guards attending there, and all whom it may concern, to see obedience done.*"

large as the centre arch of Westminster Bridge, and that the river ran claret. Claret and John Dorys were his especial weaknesses. His first care in the morning was to send into the market for a supply of that fish, if there was not any to be had he would turn round on his pillow, with, "call me to-morrow morning." The following *jeu d'esprit* humourously hits off these proclivities.

A Soliloquy by Mr. Quin, upon seeing the body of Duke Humphry, at the Cathedral of St. Albans.

"A plague of Egypt's Arts I say;
Embalm the dead! on senseless clay,
Rich wines and spices waste;
Like sturgeon, or like brawn, shall I
Bound in a precious pickle lie,
Which I can never taste?
Let me embalm this flesh of mine
With turtle fat, and Bourdeaux wine,
And spoil the Egyptian trade!
Than good Duke Humphry, happier I,
Embalm'd alive; old Quin shall die,
A mummy ready made."

He had a great dislike to angling, regarding it as cruel sport. "Suppose now," he would say, "a being who was as much my superior as I am to these poor fish were to say, 'this is a fine evening, I'll go a Quining.' If he were to bait with a haunch of venison I should gorge. And how should I like to be dragged from Richmond to Kingston floundering and flouncing with a hook in my gullet?"

The humorous and caustic speeches attributed to him would fill a jest-book. Garrick's small stature was an inexhaustible subject for the jokes of his rivals. One very wet night, he and Quin were at a tavern together. Two chairs were sent for but only one could be found, "Never mind," cried Quin, "We can both go in the one." "How?" demanded Davy. "Nothing easier, I'll go in the chair, and you, Davy, shall go in the lantern."

At a dinner one day a nobleman, not celebrated for his intellect, remarked, "What a pity it is, Quin, my boy, that a clever fellow like you should be a player." "What would your lordship have me—a *lord*?" he retorted contemptuously. One night he had to make an apology for a favourite dancer, and was greatly disgusted at the audience being out of humour at such a disappointment. "Ladies and Gentlemen," he began very brusquely, "Madame Roland has put her ankle out—" here a murmur interrupted him, at which he added savagely, "I wish she had put her neck out and be d—d to her." A young student once waited upon him to state his desire of going upon the stage, and to give an idea of his capabilities offered to recite Hamlet's soliloquy; but he had not got beyond "To be, or not to be," when Quin stopped him with "Not to be, upon my honour." Quin once remarked, in the company of Warburton, that he thought the execution of Charles I. might

be justified. "By what law?" demanded the bishop. "By all the laws he had left," was the reply. There is a good story told against him. He was stopping at a farm-house in Somersetshire, and had turned his horse out to grass. One day he could not find it; in his search he met a country fellow, of whom he demanded if he had seen the animal; the man answered he had not. "Have you any thieves about here?" inquired Quin. "No," answered the yokel with a grin, "but there's a Mr. Quin, a player from Lunnnon, about here, p'raps he's stole it." In his last illness the doctors were discussing how they could raise a sweat upon him as the only means of saving his life. "Only send in your bills and it's done," he said.

He was rough, coarse, caustic, but he had a good heart. When George Anne Bellamy, whom he had treated with little ceremony until he perceived her talents, was first upon the stage, he addressed to her the following kindly speech: "My dear, you are vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail on you to commit an indiscretion. Men in general are rascals; if you want anything in my power that money can purchase, come to me and say, 'James Quin, give me such a thing,' and my purse shall be at your service." An obscure actor had been discharged, and was reduced to a state of destitution. Quin interceded for him, and as he was lying in bed one

morning for lack of food and fire, burst into the room, bringing with him a suit of clothes, of which the poor fellow stood much in need. "Now, Dick, how is it you are not up and at rehearsal?" he cried. "It's all right, you can go back again." "I don't know what I shall do for a little money until treasury-day," said the actor, as he donned his new suit, with many grateful thanks. "Well, I've done all I can," said Quin bluffly; "as to money, you must put your hand in your own pocket for that." He had placed a ten-pound note there. His first introduction to Thomson the poet was somewhat similar. Thomson was imprisoned for debt, and having ordered a supper and half a dozen of claret at a neighbouring tavern, Quin sought his room, and they spent a very pleasant evening together. When he rose to depart he laid a hundred-pound note upon the table, saying, "The pleasure I've had in reading your works I cannot estimate at less than a hundred pounds, and I insist on now acquitting the debt," and without waiting for a word he hurried away. As it has been before said, his last appearance was for the benefit of Ryan. The next year the old favour was again requested, to which Quin replied, "I would play for you if I could, but I will not whistle Falstaff for you. I have willed you one thousand pounds; if you want money you may have it, and save my executors trouble."

There is not another so generous and benevolent a race as actors; they may be deficient in the orthodoxies, neglectful of the respectabilities, given to sins that the Prims and the Pures, we do not know upon what authority, have chosen to swell above all others; they may not be religious, according to routine, but they have always a plentiful supply of that virtue of which the world practises but little, although chiefly commended by divine injunction—Charity.

Part III.



THE GARRICK PERIOD.



DAVID GARRICK.

CHAPTER I.

DAVID GARRICK.

His Birth—Early Love of Acting—Education—Voyage to Lisbon—His Boyhood—Samuel Johnson—His and Garrick's Journey to London—David's Visits to the Theatre—Goes into the Wine Business—Foote's Mot—The London of 1738—Garrick's First Appearance in London—Goodman's Fields Theatre—The Licensing Act—Garrick as Harlequin—His Début as Richard—Copy of the Playbill—His Marvellous Success—Quin's Mot—Engaged for Drury Lane—His Hamlet—Abel Drugger—Anecdotes of His Supposed Meanness—Of his Generosity—A Jest of Quin's.

THE Garrigues, the original form of the name, were of French extraction. The grandfather of the great actor was a refugee driven over to England by the revocation of the edict of Nantes. A son of his, an officer in the English army, married the daughter of a Lichfield parson, of Irish extraction, and an offspring of this marriage was David Garrick, born at Hereford, where his father, Captain Garrick, was then quartered, on February 19, 1716. The blood of three nationalities—French, Irish, English—was about equally mixed in his veins. He was educated at the Lichfield Grammar School, which he entered just as another future celebrity, a companion of his—Samuel Johnson, some seven years his senior, was leaving it.

By the time he was eleven years of age David had

begun to feel the prickings of his inborn vocation, and had organised a company of juvenile players for the performance of Farquhar's "Recruiting Officer," in which he himself acted Kite, and one of his sisters the chambermaid. A stop, however, was about this time put to such diversions by a summons from his Uncle David, a wine merchant settled in Portugal, who proposed to take him into the business, and at eleven years old little David made the voyage to Lisbon alone. But it is to be supposed that the business did not suit him, as in less than twelve months we find him back in England entertaining his good Lichfield friends with more amateur performances.

About four years afterwards his father, who had long since retired on half-pay, exchanged with a captain who had been ordered to Gibraltar. He left his wife, inconsolable at his loss, and his children at home. David, probably in virtue of his superior shrewdness and talents, for the other brothers were but poor drones, seems to have taken his father's place, and to have managed all the family affairs—at least he conducted the correspondence with the captain, made known all the little domestic wants, and arranged all the money matters. These letters have been preserved, and are now in the Foster Collection at South Kensington. Although written by a mere boy, they are full of cleverness and vivacity, as well as suggestive of the *res augusta domi* of a

poor officer's household. They contain stories of clamorous creditors, of pinchings to pay, of old patched clothes, of children almost in rags, and of all the shifts and mortifications of genteel poverty. Such memories made of David a thrifty man in after years; they bitterly taught him the value of every coin, and engendered that yearning after and clinging to money born of the want of it; a man of noble, generous soul is seldom the product of a youth of privation.

The bright-eyed, clever, vivacious boy was a welcome guest at all the best houses, and more particularly at the officers' mess in the little remote Cathedral garrison town. More than one colonel offered him a cornetcy, which it was strange he did not accept—unless his secret mind was already bent upon the sock and buskin. When his father returned after a four years' absence, it was thought time to decide upon a profession for him; upon some deliberation the bar was chosen, and it was determined he should at once proceed to London and enter himself at one of the Inns of Court.

In 1736 there appeared an advertisement in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, setting forth that Samuel Johnson boarded and taught young gentlemen the Latin and Greek languages at Edial, near Lichfield. His only pupils were David and his brother George, and a young gentleman named Offely. The academy was neither profitable nor to the master's

tastes, for he was writing a tragedy—the ponderous ‘Irene’—which was to make his fortune and immortalise his name.* Thereafter Garrick used to tell how he and others would watch the pedagogue through the keyhole of his chamber door, at night, sitting by the bed composing this work, declaiming the long-winded speeches, and in his excitement tucking in the bed-clothes as though he were already in bed. Well, Samuel tired of pedagogism and obscurity, resolved, just about the same time that his pupil’s lot in life was determined upon, to try his fortune in London, and it was agreed they should travel together. Mr. Walmsley, a mutual friend, gave them a letter of introduction to the Reverend John Colson, of Rochester, a very learned man. (Johnson has drawn his character under the name of Gelidus in *Rambler* No. 24.) Garrick was to be his pupil and board and lodge with him; his companion was recommended as a good scholar and one who might turn out “a fine tragedy writer,” and whom, perhaps, he might assist to some literary employment. So to London

* When David became a lessee of Drury Lane, he accepted and produced this play out of friendship for the author, and ran it nine nights in order that he might make some profit by it; but even such actors as Garrick, Barry, Mrs. Cibber, and Mrs. Pritchard could not vivify this mass of dulness. Johnson was very sore upon the point, and it is probable that much of his scorn for players, and his pique against Garrick in particular, were born of this failure.

they went, with, as the story goes, a horse between them, each riding and walking a stage alternately. In due time they arrived, "I," said Johnson one day, years afterwards, "with two-pence halfpenny in my pocket, and thou, Davy, with three halfpence in thine." This was undoubtedly an exaggeration in David's case—the captain would not have permitted his son to enter upon the world so scantily provided—although it might have been true in Sam's; but that despiser of players would not allow, even when it was reduced to a question of pence, his *compagnon de voyage* to have the best of it.

And so David Garrick and Samuel Johnson cast themselves upon the great world of London, the one to fight for the prizes of life as a barrister, the other to win fortune as a play-writer. Such stories were very common in that age, especially the latter. How many young fellows, both before and after, have thrust some leaden, turgid poem or play, that had excited the wonder and admiration of rustic society, into their pockets, and full of golden dreams, shouldered a change of clothes upon the end of a stick and trudged on cheerfully to the great metropolis, there to be lost in ruin and misery, or to return home to more prosaic employments, sadder and wiser men?

While Johnson was making his round of the booksellers in search of employment, Davy was

pursuing his studies under the Reverend John Colson at Rochester, and making occasional journeys to town to visit his darling theatres, after each of which his prospective profession became more and more unendurable to him. Little thought the actors that there sat in one corner of the pit an obscure young country fellow who was noting their shortcomings, and thinking how differently he would act if he were among them, and who was destined to sweep away all the mouthing, strutting, sing-song traditions of their effete school, and bring about a marvellous revolution in their art. There is no doubt that even at this period his whole soul was absorbed by such thoughts, and only consideration for the prejudices of his family withheld him from thrusting himself upon the stage.

He had left Lichfield but a few weeks when the sad news of his father's death was brought to him. And soon afterwards his uncle, the Lisbon wine-merchant, who had come over to England, also died, bequeathing him £1000. His brother Peter, who had begun life as a midshipman, sank the little money the captain had left him in a wine business, and proposed that David should join him. Anything was better to his taste than the law, so he threw away his books and exchanged the bar for the cellar. The business was to be carried on both in Lichfield and London: Peter was to conduct the country branch, David the town. The

cellars were in Durham Yard, upon the site of which the Adelphi Terrace was afterwards raised. "He lived with three quarts of vinegar in a cellar, and called himself a wine-merchant," said spiteful Foote. But he really seems to have had a very respectable business, as he supplied most of the houses in the neighbourhood of Covent Garden.

But Davy could no more give his mind to wine than he could to the law. The London of 1738 was very different to the dull, nondescript Temple of Mammon it has become to-day. Between St. Paul's Cathedral and St. Martin's Church there lay a region where business, that leaden-headed fetish of this enlightened age, was not supremely worshipped; and where brains, astounding as the assertion may sound to the rising generation, were esteemed more than gold; it was the region of wits, authors, actors, books, theatres, coffee-houses, and taverns—a delightful region, quite Parisian in its gaiety. All the wit and genius of England might have been found in the coffee-houses and taverns of Fleet Street and Covent Garden, forming a society as brilliant, and more diverse than even that of the French *salons*. But it was oligarchical; the vulgar mob, kept within its proper bounds, had not yet overflowed into and profaned every place of public resort, so as to drive the refined into the exclusive dulness of clubs, or home life. The country gentleman who spent an evening at the Bedford, or the

Mitre, had a memory of delight for the remainder of his life, and his less fortunate friends never wearied of listening to his descriptions of the celebrities he had seen there, and the witty things he had heard fall from their lips. Such was the society into which David Garrick, full of fire and spirit, eagerly pushed his way, and was well received. Macklin, when speaking of this time, used to say that the stage possessed him wholly, that he could talk of nothing else but the theatre. He belonged to all the actors' clubs, and was the delight of private parties from his powers of mimicry; when an actor's merits were discussed, he would jump upon a table and give an exact imitation of him.

As it may be supposed, the wine business did not flourish beneath such habits as those of the London partner, and fell into difficulties. A year after his father's death (1738) David lost his mother, who, it is said, died of pure grief for the husband on whom she doated. The last great obstacle to his wishes was now removed; but still, for want of an opening, he delayed the inevitable step. Johnson, who was then writing for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, introduced him to Cave, and in some way or other there was an amateur performance of Fielding's "Mock Doctor" got up in the room over St. John's Gate, in which Garrick took a part and made his first appearance before a London audience. After this he wrote erratic verses for the

Magazine, which may still be distinguished by the signature "G.," and criticisms upon the theatre; he obtained the *entrée* to Drury Lane, wrote the first draught of a farce called "Lethe," and fell in love with beautiful Peg Woffington, who made her London *début* in 1740. Poor wine business!

Among his other theatrical friends was Giffard, the manager of the Ayliffe Street Theatre in Goodman's Fields, (built in 1732 upon the site of a silk-throwster's shop, which had been previously used for dramatic entertainments). The licensing bill, however, passed in 1737, strictly limited the number of metropolitan theatres to two, condemned all others as illegal, and all actors therein to be treated as rogues and vagabonds.* Thus the performance of stage plays at this house became

* It also enacted, for the first time, that all plays should be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain before they could be acted. This measure was said to have been brought about by Henry Fielding's political squibs "Pasquin" and "The Historical Register." But it was rather the immediate effect of a play, never acted, entitled "The Golden Rump," which in its abuse of Ministers, and even of the King himself, so far exceeded all that had gone before, that it was considered necessary to put a decided curb upon the licentiousness of the stage. The MS. of this piece, the author of which is unknown, was sent to Giffard, who, frightened at its audacity, carried it to Walpole; the licensing bill was at once introduced and passed, in spite of the strong opposition of Lord Chesterfield and others. Giffard received £1000 for his loyal conduct. The public were very indignant, and vigorously hissed the licensed plays. But the necessity of a dramatic censorship cannot be disputed; how poorly the public guard their own

illegal, and could only be accomplished by the *ruse* of issuing tickets for a concert and giving the play gratis. One night, during the run of a pantomime called "Harlequin Student," Yates, the harlequin, was taken so ill that he could not appear. Garrick, who was behind the scenes at the time, offered to take his place; the offer was accepted, and so it was he made his first bound upon the regular stage. And it must be remembered that the harlequin of those days was not the mere jumping Jack he is now; he was the hero of the pantomime, and had to act and speak. How he acquitted himself in a *rôle*, for which his nimbleness and vivacity well suited him, is not recorded, but immediately afterwards Giffard engaged him for Ipswich, where, under the name of Lydgate, he appeared as Aboan in Southerne's "Oroonoko;" then as Chamont in Otway's "Orphan," and Sir Harry Wildair in Farquhar's "Constant Couple."

All this time poor Peter was living with *his* three quarts of vinegar at Lichfield, in happy ignorance of his partner's doings, though a little troubled over the increasing difficulties of the firm. But the blow was coming fast. Upon his return to London, David seems to have applied for an *en*-self-respect is proved by the indecencies they patronise, and but for such a restraint, there would not be a crime committed, however atrocious, that some unprincipled manager would not represent it upon his stage as glowingly as do the cuts in certain disgraceful weekly publications.

gement at both the patent houses, but meeting with no encouragement, he was obliged to choose a humbler scene for his appearance in the metropolis, the unlicensed theatre in Goodman's Fields, where he made his *début* on October 19, 1741.

I subjoin a verbatim copy of a portion of the bill for that night, so momentous in stage annals.

October 19, 1741.

At the Theatre in GOODMAN'S FIELDS, this day will be performed,
A Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, divided into two parts.

Tickets at Three, Two, and One Shilling.

Places for the Boxes to be taken at the Fleece Tavern, near the
Theatre.

N.B.—Between the two Parts of the Concert will be presented
an Historical Play, called the

LIFE AND DEATH OF KING RICHARD THE THIRD.

Containing the distresses of Henry 6th,
The Artful Acquisition of the Crown by King Richard,
The Murder of young King Edward 5th and his Brother in the Tower,
The Landing of the Earl of Richmond,
And the Death of King Richard in the memorable Battle of Bosworth Field, being the last that was fought between the houses
of York and Lancaster, with many other true Historical
passages.

The part of *King Richard* by A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

(*Who never appeared on any Stage.*)

Then follows the cast of characters, and the
announcement of an

Entertainment of Dancing, to conclude with a Ballad Opera called

THE VIRGIN UNMASKED,

both of which will be performed Gratis, by persons for their diversion.

The Concert will begin exactly at 6 o'clock.

Garrick had many of his tavern and coffee-house friends in front, among others Macklin and "Gentleman" Smith. From his first soliloquy the audience could perceive that a new light had burst upon the stage; there was no drawl, no sing-song, no mouthing, all was new, natural, full of fire and passion; some of the points literally electrified them; as when he dashed away the prayer-book after his interview with the Lord Mayor; his "Off with his head, so much for Buckingham;" his marvellous tent scene, his wild chaotic fury in the last act, which had always before been a piece of measured declamation; his savage fight, his terrible death, in which his cruel fingers seemed in their agony digging their own grave. No such acting lingered in any living memory. The *Daily Post* said next morning that his reception "was the most extraordinary and great that was ever known on such an occasion."

Macklin speaking of this first performance, at which he was present, says. "It was amazing how, without any example, but, on the contrary, with great prejudices against him, he could throw such spirit and novelty into the part, as to convince

every impartial person, on the very first impression that he was right. In short, Sir, he at once decided the public taste ; and though the players formed a cabal against him, with Quin at their head, it was a puff to thunder ; the east and west end of the town made head against them ; and the little fellow in this, and about half a dozen subsequent characters, secured his own immortality."

Assured of success he wrote at once to Peter, acquainting him with the step he had taken, and trying to make an apology out of the badness of their business, and from the fact that he could make £300 a year by his new profession, which was more than he could ever hope to draw from the wine trade. Peter, his brothers and sisters, and all Lichfield society, were of course horrified and outraged at a man sinking from the elevation of a poor tradesman to be an exponent of Shakespeare, and there were pitiful lamentations over the family disgrace. A few months afterwards, when David had already become a great man, the disgraced family were not at all backward in requesting and receiving favours continually from such a disreputable source.

For a time the receipts at Goodman's Fields did not average above £30 nightly ; but the fame of the new actor was being rapidly spread. By-and-by came the rush, until the carriages extended from Temple Bar to Whitechapel. Pope was drawn from Twickenham to see this prodigy, and the sight of

the little black figure in the boxes at first greatly disconcerted the young actor. "That young man never had an equal, and will never have a rival," was the great poet's expressed opinion. And the value of that testimony is heightened by the fact that Pope was a most ardent admirer of Betterton. Then came Pitt; who pronounced him to be, "the only actor in England;" and Halifax, Chesterfield, and Sandwich, who invited him to dine with them. His terms were increased from one pound a night to half the profits. Quin came to see him and called him the Whitfield of the stage, which was very appropriate; only his prophecy that the people would soon get tired of the novelty and go back to their church was not so happy. Soon the patent theatres, now deserted, were glad to make overtures to him, and he accepted an engagement at Drury Lane at £600 per annum for the ensuing season.

It was on the 2nd of December, 1741, that, dropping his fictitious name on the occasion of his benefit, he first appeared in the bills as David Garrick. He continued to play in the east until the 29th of May in the following year. Since the previous November he had appeared in nineteen different characters—Richard, Chamont, Lothario, the Ghost (in "Hamlet,") Aboan, Lear, and Pierre, in tragedy. In comedy, amongst others, Fondlewife, Bayes, in the "Rehearsal," in which he gave his imitations of actors, Lord Foppington,

Johnny the Schoolboy, Duretete, &c. At the end of the Drury Lane season he appeared there for three nights to crowded houses, as Richard, Bayes, and Lear.

The Reverend T. Newton, writing to him in that year, says, "And Mrs. Porter is no less in raptures than the rest ; she has returned to town on purpose to see you, and declares she would not but have come for the world. You are born an actor, she says, and do more at your first appearance than ever any body did with twenty years' practice. And, good God, says she, what will he be in time ! And when somebody in company mentioned your not doing Lord Foppington well, she made answer, that she was sure it was impossible for you to do anything ill ; you might perhaps excel less in that, but you must excel in everything."

During the summer he played at Dublin, where his success was as prodigious as it had been in London ; so great was the crowd that an epidemic, the product of heat and dirt, broke out, which was called the Garrick fever. It was there he was given the name of Roscius. During an engagement of two months he took three benefits ; for the last he appeared as Hamlet, for the first time. This, according to contemporary accounts, must have been a very beautiful performance, full of refinement and sensitiveness. Partridge's immortal criticism will occur to every reader of Fielding.

“ You may call me a coward if you will, but if that little man there upon the stage is not frightened, I never saw a man frightened in my life . . . Did you not yourself observe afterwards when he found out it was his father’s spirit, and how he was murdered in the garden, how his fear forsook him by degrees, and he was struck dumb with sorrow, as it were, just as I should have been had it been my own case He the best player ! why, I could act as well as he myself. I am sure if I had seen a ghost I should have looked in the same manner, and done just as he did.”

Hannah More gives us a fine description, written some years later, of his acting in this part. “ The requisites for Hamlet are not only various but opposed, in him they are all united, and, as it were, concentrated ; one thing I must particularly remark, that, whether in the simulation of madness, in the sinkings of despair, in the familiarity of friendship, in the whirlwind of passion, or the meltings of tenderness, he never once forgot he was a prince ; and in every variety of situation and transition of feelings, you discovered the highest polish of good breeding and courtly manners.* To the most eloquent expression of the eye, to the handwriting of his passions on his features, to a sensibility which tears to pieces the hearts of his auditors,

* This is a portion of the character which recent actors entirely overlook.

to powers so unparalleled, he adds a judgment of the most exquisite accuracy, the fruit of long experience and close observation, by which he preserves every gradation and transition of the passions, keeping all under the control of a just dependance and natural consistency; so naturally, indeed, do the ideas of the poet seem to mix with his own, that he seemed himself to be engaged in a succession of affecting situations; not giving utterance to a speech, but to the instantaneous expression of his feelings, delivered in the most affecting tones of voice, and with gestures that belong only to nature. It was a fiction as delightful as fancy, and as touching as truth. A few nights before, I saw him in 'Abel Drugger,' and had I not seen him in both, I should have thought it as possible for Milton to have written 'Hudibras,' and Butler 'Paradise Lost,' as for one man to have played Hamlet and Drugger with such excellence."

This reference to Jonson's celebrated character will serve to introduce a very opposite picture of Garrick's genius, by another hand. "Abel Drugger's first appearance would disconcert the muscular economy of the wisest. His attitude, his dread of offending the doctor, his saying nothing, his gradual stealing in farther and farther, his impatience to be introduced, his joy to his friend Face, are imitable by none. When he first opens his mouth, the features of his face seem, as it were, to drop

upon his tongue; it is all caution, it is timorous, stammering and inexpressible. When he stands under the conjuror to have his features examined, his teeth, his beard, his little finger, his awkward simplicity, and his concern, mixed with hope, and fear, and joy, and avarice, and good-nature, are beyond painting."

There is a good story told of the effect he produced in this part. A Lichfield grocer had come up with a letter of recommendation to David from his brother Peter. Arriving in London in the evening, he went into the two-shilling gallery to see the wonderful actor of whom he had heard so much, intending to deliver his credentials next morning. But Garrick played that night Abel Drugger, and so disgusted the honest grocer that he would not go near him. "Well," he said to Peter on his return home, and giving him back the letter, "though Mr. Garrick be your brother, he is one of the shabbiest, meanest, most pitiful hounds I ever saw in the whole course of my life."

The Lichfield shopkeeper was not the only person whom he disgusted in this character; a young lady of large fortune, who had fallen so desperately in love with him in Chamont, that she actually employed a go-between to make overtures of marriage, was so disillusionised by his appearance in Abel Drugger, that she could not again endure the thought of him.

Upon returning to London he, Macklin, and Woffington kept house together at No. 6, Bow Street, each undertaking the management for a month. The partnership did not long endure; Peggy's extravagances not being acceptable to careful David. It is now we begin to hear stories of his meanness and avarice, upon which Foote and so many others exercised their wit and their malice throughout his life—and after it. "Peggy made the tea too strong," said one. Well, it is impossible for a man to ever shake off his early impressions; in the old Lichfield time, when the captain was away in Gibraltar, the tea had doubtless to be eked out—it was an expensive article then—and the question of even a few grains was one of importance in the needy officer's family; David had not forgotten those days, and could not endure wastefulness—more honour to him. There is another story told of his walking up and down before his house one evening with some person of great importance from whom he could not break away abruptly, in perfect agony at seeing through the dining-room window a thief in one of the candles guttering it down to the socket. The anecdote is told as an illustration of his meanness; but would it not be more just to ascribe it to his horror of waste? So thought Johnson, and no man was at times more harsh and bitter in his judgment of the player who had outstripped him on the road to fame and fortune.

“I know,” he said, defending him against Wilks, who said he would play Scrub all his life—
“I know that Garrick has given away more money than any man in England that I am acquainted with; and that not from ostentatious views. Garrick was very poor when he began life; so, when he came to have money, he probably was unskilful in giving away, and saved when he should not. But Garrick began to be liberal as soon as he could.”
The authentic anecdotes of his generosity far outnumber those of his meanness, for which Foote’s jests are the chief authority. But truth was never considered to be a necessary element of those utterances, and the man who had run through three fortunes himself was not qualified to be a judge of such matters. Once when Garrick was asked to give two guineas to a poor widow, he answered, “No, I cannot do that.” “Well then, what you please,” replied the solicitant. And he gave him thirty pounds. He lent a poor surgeon once a thousand pounds without security, and was never repaid. Berenger, the Deputy Master of the Horse, had not sufficient income to support his position, and fell so deeply into debt that he dared not leave his house in the King’s Mews, where, by privilege, he was safe from arrest. Garrick headed a subscription among his friends to buy up his bonds and notes. When this was done he gave a dinner to celebrate the event, and made a *feu-de-joie* of the papers. Among

those cast upon the fire was a bond for £500 owed to himself.

When Christie, the auctioneer was reduced to great straits by the death of a gentleman who was largely indebted to him, he and a mutual friend paid a visit to Hampton, where the latter took an opportunity of acquainting Garrick with his position. Soon afterwards the host called Christie into a private room, told him what he had heard and offered him the loan of £5,000. Foote frequently experienced his generosity, and was never refused a loan. While he was holding the "Jubilee" up to ridicule, its author was using his best influence for him with newspaper editors and proprietors, and advancing him money to meet heavy demands. Foote was dastardly enough to ascribe these actions to fear of his pen and his mimicry. Yet when crushed beneath Jackson's and the Duchess of Kingston's prosecution he was far more pitiable than formidable, and when Garrick might have safely avenged himself for the many insults he had received, he stood by him, his firmest friend, and wrung from the bitter cynic a letter of tearful gratitude. "God for ever bless you—may nothing but halcyon days and nights crown the rest of your life, is the sincere prayer of Samuel Foote." It would be impossible to strengthen such testimonies as these to his excellence of heart. He was always ready to return good for evil. Smollet

was very bitter because he would not accept his unactable play of "The Regicide," and attacked him under the name of Brayer in Mr. Melopyn's story in "Roderick Randon." Yet Garrick afterwards accepted an indifferent farce of his, "The Tars of Old England," and on his benefit night charged him only sixty pounds for the theatre when the regular charge was ninety.

It might have vexed David Garrick to have tea unnecessarily strong, or to have seen "a thief" guttering his candle, or to have uselessly squandered a halfpenny, but he could be princely generous for all that. "Ah, I would wish the world to believe," writes Cumberland, "that they take but a very short and partial estimate of that departed character who only appreciate him as the best actor in the world. He was more and better than that excellence alone could make him by a thousand estimable qualities, and much as I enjoyed his company, I have been more gratified by the emanations of his heart than by the sallies of his fancy and imagination."

But I am going too fast: David is not a rich man yet, and has not much to spare for generous deeds, although his poor disgraced family are very clamorous for him to do something for their children.

The next important part he undertook in tragedy, Othello, was a failure. His appearance was against

him; his black face—for the Moor was a nigger in those days—and his small figure clad in the scarlet uniform of a British officer must have produced rather a comic *coup d'œil*. Quin was in the pit on the first night, and when he entered exclaimed loud enough to be heard upon the stage, "Here's Pompey, by —, where's the lamp and the tea-kettle?" (alluding to Hogarth's black boy). In the next season Barry came with his splendid and majestic figure and drew all London to see him as the noble Moor. Upon which Garrick very wisely abandoned the part.

A most disastrous season for the theatres was the year of the Rebellion. Garrick paid a second and last visit to Dublin, and did not appear in London until the May of '46, when he played at Covent Garden for six nights at £50 a night. It was the most critical, indeed the turning point of his career. Barry, then in his first season, was drawing crowds to Drury Lane by his *Othello*, *Lord Townley*, *Macbeth*, &c., and now he, Garrick, was to be pitted against Quin upon the same boards, the two styles of acting were to be brought face to face, put upon their trial, and judgment pronounced. It was to be the battle of the old and the new school, and no quarter would be given. The excitement out of doors was such as we cannot conceive in these days of indifferentism. It was on the 14th of November, 1746, in Rowe's "*Fair Penitent*," the duel took

place. Cumberland, then a youth, was present, and has bequeathed us a most graphic picture of the event.

“I have the ‘spectacle even now before my eyes. Quin presented himself, on the rising of the curtain, in a green velvet coat, embroidered down the seams, an enormous full-bottomed periwig, rolled stockings, and high-heeled, square-toed shoes. With very little variation of cadence, and in a deep full tone, accompanied by a sawing kind of action, which had more of the senate than the stage in it, he rolled out his heroics with an air of dignified indifference, that seemed to disdain the plaudits that were bestowed upon him, but when after long and eager expectation I saw little Garrick, then young and light, and alive in every muscle and in every feature, come bounding on the stage, and pointing at the wittol Altamont and heavy-paced Horatio—heavens, what a transition!—it seemed as if a whole century had been swept over in the transition of a single scene; old things were done away, and a new order at once brought forward, bright and luminous, and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age, too long attached to prejudices of custom, and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation. This heaven-born actor was struggling then to emancipate his audience from the slavery they were resigned to, yet in general they

seemed to love darkness better than light, and in the dialogue of altercation between Horatio and Lothario bestowed far the greater show of hands upon the master of the old school than upon the founder of the new."

After this the two rivals appeared as Falstaff and Hotspur: here Quin had the best, for Percy was not one of Garrick's successful parts. But in Rowe's "Jane Shore" the tables were again turned; Quin strutted and bellowed through Glo'ster, but Garrick played Hastings superbly, and it continued to be one of his finest impersonations. That capital comedy, too, "The Suspicious Husband," gave him an opening for such comedy-acting as had never been witnessed before in that generation. Nothing more dashing, vivacious, and artistic than his Ranger could be conceived.

Ere this Fleetwood had disposed of his patent to a gentleman named Lacy, who had been a Norwich manufacturer, but who, upon falling into difficulties in his business, had joined Rich's company as an actor. Drury Lane being in the market he found two bankers to pay down for him on mortgage £3,200 each, and for the £6,400 obtained the patent, to which, however, was tagged an annuity of £600 a year for the late manager. But Lacy was scarcely more fortunate than his predecessor, and in consequence of the failure of his two backers, Green and Amber, through a run upon their bank during the

"'45," he fell into debt and difficulties. In 1747 Garrick entered into partnership with him. The liabilities of the theatre were then about £12,000, towards the discharge of which Garrick found £8,000, and entered into an agreement to receive £500 a year for management, and the same for acting; the profits, of course, to be afterwards divided between the partners. He opened the theatre with the "Merchant of Venice," Macklin as Shylock. It was a grand company he gathered about him. Himself, Barry, and Macklin, the leading men (Quin had retired in disgust), Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Woffington, Mrs. Clive, were among the ladies. Macklin was the Shylock; Barry the Hamlet, Othello, Pierre; Garrick the Archer, Abel Dragger, Lear, Richard, Sir John Brute, Hamlet, Macbeth; Barry and Garrick appeared together as Chamont and Castalio ("The Orphan"); Lothario and Horatio ("Fair Penitent"); Jaffer and Pierre ("Venice Preserved.") How one envies one's ancestors who beheld these splendid intellectual contests! The first great event of Garrick's management was the revival of *Shakespeare's Macbeth*. "What, haven't I been playing Shakespeare's Macbeth?" exclaimed Quin. Indeed he had not, but a garbled version of Davenant's. It was not all Shakespeare, however; he introduced a dying speech, and retained the interpolations in the witches scenes. Macbeth was a part then little esteemed by trage-

dians ; Garrick was the first, after the Restoration, to display its wonderful capabilities. Actors said all the pith of it was exhausted in the first and second acts. Garrick smiled at their remarks, and replied that he should be very unfortunate if he could not keep alive the attention of the audience to the last syllable of so animated a character. Yet he was not altogether easy about the revival, and with his usual fear and fidgetiness, whenever he stepped beyond precedent, anticipated public censure and objections to his experiment by issuing a pamphlet bearing the motto "Macbeth hath murdered Garrick," and in which he styled himself "a certain fashionable faulty actor." He thus, as it were, disarmed his opponents by striking the first blow at himself. It became one of his grandest impersonations, and although he played it in a scarlet coat, gold-laced waistcoat and powdered wig, he produced an impression such as no representative of the character has since equalled.* He had appeared in this tragedy in 1744, with Mrs. Giffard for his lady, but now he had the incomparable Pritchard,

* Never was man more cautious of offending the conservative predilections of an English audience. When, thereafter, it was proposed to him that he should dress Macbeth in Highland costume, he answered, "You forget the Pretender was here only thirty years ago, and, egad, I should be pelted off with orange peel." When West, the painter, remonstrated with him on playing Horatius in a dressing-gown and peruke, instead of a toga, he replied in the same strain, "I don't want my house pulled about my ears ; Quin dressed it so, and I dare not innovate."

who fully shared the honours with him. Davies finely describes how the two played the murder scene.

“The representation of this terrible part of the play by Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard can no more be described than I believe it can be equalled. I will not separate their performances, for the merits of both were transcendent. His distraction of mind and agonising horrors were finely contrasted by her seeming apathy, tranquillity, and confidence. The beginning of the scene after the murder, was conducted in terrifying whispers. Their looks and action supplied the place of words. You heard what they spoke, but you learned more from the agitation of mind displayed in their action and deportment. The poet here gives an outline of the consummate actor.—*I have done the deed.—Didst thou not hear a noise?—When?—Did you not speak?*—The dark colouring, given by the actor to these abrupt speeches, makes the scene awful and tremendous to the auditors. The wonderful expression of heartfelt horror, which Garrick felt when he showed his bloody hands, can only be conceived and described by those who saw him.”

CHAPTER II.

DAVID GARRICK (*continued.*)

His Marriage—A Romance—The Rival Romeos—Garrick's Home-Life—His King Lear—His Sir John Brute—Roses and Thorns—Declining Power of Attraction—His Visit to Paris—His "Rounds"—He Visits Rome, Naples, Parma—His Splendid Reception everywhere—"The Sick Monkey"—His Re-appearance in London—His Welcome—The Stratford Jubilee—Retiring—Farewell Performances—In the House of Commons—Anecdotes of Mrs. Garrick—Her Death—Garrick as an Author—As an Actor—A Sketch of his Character—His Eccentricities.

IT was in 1749 he married Mademoiselle Violette, the celebrated dancer. There was a considerable amount of mystery and romance about this lady. She was said to be the daughter of a citizen of Vienna, named Viegel—although once in conversation she declared herself to be of noble birth—probably illegitimately. When the children of Maria Theresa were learning dancing, she, then a little girl, was taken into the palace with some others to form a sort of class; the Empress took a fancy to her, and requested her to change her name from Viegel, which in a German *patois* means violet, to the prettier French form of the word. By and bye the Emperor, it would seem, cast his eyes upon

her, upon which Maria Theresa hurried her off to England, with recommendations to several influential persons to assist in procuring her an appearance upon the stage. She was then twenty-one years old. She came over disguised as a boy, and was immediately taken under the protection of Lady Burlington, who was probably one of the persons to whom she had introductions, and was at once received in the best society. Horace Walpole, writing in 1746, says: "The fame of the Violette increases daily; the sister Countesses of Burlington and Talbot exert all their stores of sullen partiality in competition for her; the former visits her, and is having her picture, and carries her to Chiswick, and she sups at Lady Carlisle's," &c. She made her *début* at the Opera House, and the King came to do it honour. The daughters of her aristocratic patroness used to stand at the wings at night with wraps to throw round her when she came off from her dance. A romantic story was invented that she was the daughter of the Earl, that he had discovered her while travelling abroad from her likeness to her mother, a lady to whom he had been devotedly attached. But Violette was not born until two years after his marriage, after which he resided for several consecutive years entirely in England, which fact would seem to dispose of that story. Seeing Garrick play one night, she fell desperately in love

with him. He was not the great man then he afterwards became, and Lady Burlington was violently opposed to the match. But they frequently met in society. "There was an admirable scene," writes Walpole, (1749), "Lady Burlington brought the Violette, and the Richmonds had asked Garrick, who stood ogling and sighing the whole time, while my lady kept a most fierce look-out." They also met clandestinely. Once our hero disguised himself as a woman to hand her a letter as she passed by in her chair. The Countess privately remonstrated with him, and he promised to endeavour to cure Mademoiselle of her passion. The story of Robertson's "David Garrick," in which he assumes drunkenness for a similar purpose, is said to be founded upon a true incident of this love-affair; but the real catastrophe was very different to the fictitious one; for the Countess, touched by the actor's generous self-sacrifice, gave her consent to the marriage. A dowry of £10,000 was settled upon the bride, £6,000 by the Burlingtons, £4,000 by Garrick. They took up their abode in Southampton Street, Strand, a not unfashionable neighbourhood then. The house is still standing, No. 27, and the little back room in which they used to breakfast is said to be little changed. It was characteristic of his love of making his most private affairs a town talk, that he played "Much Ado About Nothing" on the night after his wed-

ding. The allusion to Benedick, the married man, amused the audience vastly. He also wrote and published verses upon the event.

1750-51 was the celebrated "Romeo and Juliet" season. This play had gone through several alterations since the Restoration; Otway had transformed the two lovers of Verona into classical Romans in his "Caius Marius," James Howard turned the play into a tragic-comedy, and left them living at the fall of the curtain. In Sir William Davenant's time it was played on alternate evenings as a comedy and a tragedy, to suit different tastes. Theophilus Cibber made a version of his own during his brief season at the Haymarket. This was played once at Drury Lane in 1748; but when Garrick revived it on this occasion he produced the play with those alterations still familiar to old play-goers, and still adhered to in country theatres, in which Romeo revives after Juliet's awakening. On the 28th of September, 1750, the tragedy was produced at both houses. Barry, jealous of Garrick, and Mrs. Cibber discontented with him, had gone over to Covent Garden; Woffington and Macklin followed their example. Barry, in a prologue, insinuated that he had been driven from Drury Lane by the manager's arrogance and selfishness—he might with greater justice have applied the terms to himself. At Covent Garden Barry was the Romeo, Macklin the Mercutio, Mrs.

Cibber the Juliet. At Drury Lane the parts were sustained by Garrick, Woodward, and Mrs. Bellamy. The town was divided between these rival claims. Barry's noble presence, handsome face, and silver-toned voice gave him great personal advantages; the balcony scene of this most delightful of stage lovers was unapproachable; but Garrick excelled in the scene with the Friar. "Had I been Juliet to Garrick's Romeo," said a lady critic, "so impassioned was he that I should have expected he would have come up to me. But had Barry been my lover, so seductive was he that I should certainly have jumped down to him." Of the Juliets Mrs. Cibber's was the more passionately pathetic; Bellamy's the more lovely, more impulsive, more natural. Barry played Romeo twelve nights, Garrick thirteen; the town was astounded at this prodigious run, and wrote epigrams upon it.

"Well, what's to-night?" says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses;
"Romeo again!" he shakes his head,
"A plague on both your houses!"

There is no doubt that Barry had the best of the contest, and Garrick afterwards wisely eliminated the part from his rôles. One night after Bellamy had sighed "O, Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou, Romeo!" a sailor in the gallery replied, "Why, because Barry plays the part at the other house, to be sure." That was the secret. It was

seldom Garrick's *amour propre* was betrayed into such injudicious rivalry, and he did not repeat the mistake.

Macklin met him one day, and said that in his next lecture he should settle the claims of the rival Romeos. Garrick was anxious to know how he proposed to do so.

"I mean to show your different merits in the garden scene. Barry comes into it, Sir, as a great lord, swaggering about his love and talking so loud, that if we don't suppose the servants of the Capulet family almost dead with sleep, they must have come out and tossed him in a blanket. Well, Sir, after having fixed my auditor's attention to this part, then I shall ask, But how does Garrick act this? Why, Sir, sensible that the family are at enmity with him and his house, he comes creeping in upon his toes, whispering his love, and looking about him like a thief in the night."

In his opening bill Garrick had warned the public not to expect rope-dancing and pantomimes under his management—for to such meretricious attractions had Rich and Fleetwood long resorted. But, alas! with all the dramatic talent he had gathered around him, he found it necessary in his third season to produce a pantomime; and he made it a great success, even against Rich, who two years afterwards turned Covent Garden into a circus and menagerie, with slack wire dancers and wild beasts.

That pantomime was the first of the long list of Christmas "Annuals," which is still in progress at Old Drury.

Turn we aside for a moment from the glitter and noise and envy of the stage to glance at the home life of the actor, of which Mr. Fitzgerald, in his admirable "Life," presents us with several charming pictures. In 1754 he purchased a villa at Hampton, on the edge of the common. "About it were pretty grounds, though separated by the high road from the pleasant sward that ran down to the river's edge, where, within a year, he was building that little bit of affectation more fitted to Drury Lane than to the little country villa—the Shakespeare Temple." Hither came the vicar, "an old clergyman of simple tastes"—whom the player's kind interest procured something better than his Hampton living of £50 a year—to chat with Mrs. Garrick over gardening matters.

"Sir John Hawkins would drop in on his road to town, and find the owner and Mrs. Garrick eating figs in the garden. Here, too, guests found their way down to spend the day and dine, and after dinner wandered into the gardens and lounged about the grounds. To them was present the figure of their host in his dark blue coat, its button-holes bound with gold edging, the small cocked hat also edged with lace—and the waistcoat free and open. The face and features were never at rest a moment.

He would be sitting on the edge of the table, chatting on grave subjects to a doctor of law or music, when the wonderful eyes, darting to this side and that, would see the little boys of his guest scampering gaily round his garden, and he would shoot away in the midst of a sentence, join them, and be a boy himself in a second."

He loved children, although he had none of his own. During the run of the "Jubilee" he had a nightly distribution of tarts to the little ones who played the fairies, and used to delight in watching their enjoyment of them. Cumberland relates how he would imitate turkey-cocks, peacocks, and water-wagtails for the amusement of his children. Here is a reminiscence of childhood by the younger Colman.

"I always ran about his gardens, where he taught me the game of trap-ball. He practised too a thousand monkey tricks upon me; he was Punch, harlequin, a cat in a gutter, then King Lear, with a mad touch that at times almost terrified me; and he had a peculiar mode of flashing the lightning of his eye, by darting it into the astonished mind of a child, as a serpent is said to fascinate a bird; which was an attribute belonging only to this theatrical Jupiter."

In 1756 he entered into a second great rivalry with Barry, as King Lear. But this time with a different result, the victory being decidedly with Garrick.

Lear was his sublimest effort in tragedy, never surpassed before, never equalled since.

Davies says: "Garrick rendered the curse so terribly affecting to the audience, that, during his utterance of it, they seemed to shrink from it as a blast of lightning. His preparation for it was extremely affecting; his throwing away his crutch, kneeling on one knee, clasping his hands together, and lifting his eyes towards heaven, presented a picture worthy of Raphael." The mad scene was an inspiration, and in the overwhelming pathos of the last act the house resounded with the sobs of the audience. One night even one of the sentinels, who were then placed on each side the proscenium during the performance, was seen weeping at his post.

Two epigrams, of the many passed about on the occasion are admirably suggestive of the styles of the two great actors.

"The town has found out different ways
To praise the different Lears!
To Barry they give loud huzzas!
To Garrick—only tears."

"A king—nay, every inch a king,
Such as Barry doth appear;
But Garrick's quite a different thing,
He's every inch King Lear."

During these contests we never hear of an ill-natured remark made by Garrick, although his

rival omitted no opportunity of casting malice and detraction upon him.

The same actor who played Lear so magnificently could, although perhaps not so well as Quin, wonderfully portray the brutalism of that vilest incarnation of bestial humanity, Sir John Brute, in Vanbrugh's "Provoked Wife." A powerful picture of his acting in the drunken scene has been bequeathed us by Lichtenberg,* and will serve as a contrast to the sublime one just given. "In Sir John Brute his mouth caught my attention directly he came upon the stage. I observed that he had drawn down the two angles slightly so as to give himself a most debauched and drunken look. This form of mouth he maintained to the end of the play, with the difference that the lips became somewhat more open the more intoxication increased. . . . When he comes home quite drunk, his face looks like the moon a few days before the last quarter, nearly half of it being obscured by the wig. The part which one does see is flushed and greasy, yet it is extremely friendly, and thus makes up for the loss of the other half. The waistcoat is open from top to bottom; the stockings hang in wrinkles;

* Lichtenberg was a German who wrote down his impressions of the great actors of the eighteenth century. I shall have to draw upon him several times in future chapters. I am indebted for the translation to some articles of Mr. Tom Taylor in the "Victoria Magazine."

the garters are loose and—very mysterious—are not a pair. It is a wonder Sir John has not picked up shoes of both sexes too. In this pickle he enters his wife's room, and to her anxious inquiry what is the matter with him, he replies, 'As sound as a roach, wife.' Yet he does not leave the door-post, against which he leans as heavily as if he wanted to rub his back on it. He then in turn becomes brutal, tipsily wise, and again friendly. In the scene where he falls asleep he amazed me, in which, with closed eyes, swimming head, and pallid face he quarrels with his wife, and melting his *r's* and *l's* into one—into a sort of dialect of medials—now abuses—now falters out scraps of morality; then the way in which he moves his lips, so that one cannot tell whether he is chewing or tasting something, or speaking—as this so much exceeded my expectations as anything else I have seen this remarkable man do." But notwithstanding these artistic triumphs, the wealth they brought him, all the adulation heaped upon him by all classes of society, and his high social position, which admitted him to an equality with the greatest of the land, there were many thorns in his bed of roses, there were sneerers and detractors to libel him in pamphlets, and stab him to the heart by jeering from the pit at his grandest efforts. One of these last was a wretched fop named Fitzpatrick, who raised a clique against him. Then there were the passions

and the prejudices of the general public to contend with, which more than once broke into riots, destroying the seats and chandeliers of the theatre, and even smashing the windows of his private dwelling. One such disturbance occurred upon his engaging French dancers for a spectacle, called "The Chinese Festival," in 1756. Upon his reappearance as Archer a night or two afterwards there was a cry for him to beg pardon. But for once he would not yield to popular clamour, and, advancing to the front, told the audience in firm, yet respectful terms, how ill, he considered, he had been treated by malicious individuals, both as regarded his property and his character; he begged to acknowledge all favours received, but unless he was that night permitted to perform his duty to the best of his ability, he was above want, superior to insult and would never, never appear on the stage again. The tumult ceased during this speech, and at the end there burst forth such applause as shook the walls of the theatre.

In 1763, the business so fell off that Garrick and Mrs. Cibber occasionally performed to thirty, and even fifteen pounds, and one night the total receipts amounted to only five pounds. Finding his power of attraction thus rapidly declining, he resolved to try the effect of absence, and at the same time endeavour to recruit his health, by no means good at the time, by travelling upon the

Continent. He had payed a flying visit to Paris in 1750 for a honeymoon trip, and had been well received, but now it was an ovation. The great French actress, Clairon, took lessons of him; at the Français he was the cynosure of every eye, every *salon* was thrown open to him, the most famous people paid him homage.

“He would sometimes favour some few friends,” says Charles Dibdin, “but it was very rare—with what he called his ‘rounds.’ This he did by standing behind a chair and conveying into his face every possible kind of passion, blending one into the other, and as it were shadowing them with a prodigious number of gradations. At one moment you laughed, at another you cried; now he terrified you, and presently you conceived yourself something horrible, he seemed so terrified at you. Afterwards he drew his features into the appearance of such dignified wisdom that Minerva might have been proud of the portrait; and then—degrading yet admirable transition—he became a driveller. In short his face became what he obliged you to fancy it: age, youth, plenty, poverty, everything it assumed.”

He gave one of his “rounds” before a select company of actors and literary men at Paris. He began with the dagger scene of “Macbeth,” thence to the “Lear” curse, from that to Sir John Brute falling into his drunken sleep, and finished by repre-

senting a pastrycook's boy, who had let fall a tray of tarts, stupid, surprise, terror, and despairing grief succeeding each other with marvellous fidelity. The spectators were struck with astonishment and admiration. Grimm fell into enthusiasm. Marmontel pronounced *that* to be the only real style of acting. "You will be to me," he said, "a continual subject of regret." It would be difficult to say how many sculptors and painters he sat to. There was one very striking picture done, it represented the comic Garrick peeping through folding doors and laughing at the tragic Garrick seated in a chair. His portrait was hung in every house. Nor was all this the mere lionising freak of the mercurial Parisians; for twelve years afterwards Gibbon heard him spoken of with affectionate regard and with wishes for his return. And Mrs. Garrick was as great a favourite as her lord. He remained three weeks in Paris, then proceeded to Italy; took up his abode for three months at Naples, where he was *fêted* by all the English inhabitants. "I am always with Lord Spencer, Lord Oxford and Lord Palmerston," he wrote home. Then he paid a visit to Rome, where he might have been seen from morning till night hunting among the curiosity shops for china and rare books. At Parma he was invited to a select dinner party given by the Duke of York to the Duke of Parma. He recited the dagger scene from *Macbeth*, and so delighted the Italian

Prince, that next day he sent him a superb snuff-box, and gave him apartments in the palace.

But by this time he began to turn longing glances towards old Drury. He had left Colman to manage in his absence, and put a young fellow named Powell, whom he had found at a spouting club, in his place as leading actor. In a revival of Beaumont's and Fletcher's "*Philaster*," Powell made a great hit, and with every succeeding part rose higher in public estimation. Lacy, in whom there was always an undercurrent of bitterness against his partner, wrote to tell him he need not hurry home, as the houses were crowded without him. Not too well satisfied, Garrick went back to Paris, where he was received with the same effusiveness as before.

He continued to make anxious inquiries as to whether his return was talked about and desired in London, and threw out a feeler in the shape of a pamphlet called "*The Sick Monkey*," in which, according to his usual fashion of anticipating censure, he supposed a congregation of animals met to talk about and abuse him and his travels. "It is among the few things he wrote," remarks Davies, "that one would wish not to remember. I believe it scarce ever urged public curiosity to read it, for it died almost still born."

He arrived in England in April 1765, and mortified, probably, at the indifference with which his pamphlet had been received, gave out that he in-

tended to retire from the stage. Very soon the King, through certain distinguished personages, sent him a remonstrance—he must not retire—would he not appear at His Majesty's request? This was precisely what he was angling for.

He made his reappearance on the 14th of September, 1765; the King was present, the house was crammed to the ceiling. As he entered upon the stage to speak the prologue he had written for the occasion, he was greeted, not with clapping of hands, but with a succession of ringing cheers. The play selected was "Much Ado About Nothing." Benedick had always been one of his finest impersonations, and the audience soon discovered that there was no falling off in the great actor; nay that his Parisian visit had given a polish, an elegance to his performance such as it had not possessed before. So careful, and judicious was he, however, that with the exception of two or three parts of which he was sure, he did not appear in any of the characters in which Powell had made a success. That young actor soon afterwards went over to Rich. His career was a short one; he died in Bristol, in 1769, in the Cathedral of which city there is a monument to his memory.

Garrick now created a *furor* greater even than that of the first year of his career; the house was filled to overflowing, and people of the highest degree bribed the attendants to admit them by a

private way to avoid the crush at the public entrance. From that time public favour remained true and steadfast to him, never again did he appear to a bad house.

It was the Mayor and Corporation of Stratford presenting him with a snuff-box made of Shakespeare's Mulberry tree, recently destroyed by a Reverend Vandal, and requesting his bust and portrait for their New Town Hall, that first suggested to him the Shakespeare Jubilee. This doubtful display of homage to the great poet took place in 1768. An enormous rotunda was erected in the meadows of Stratford, dresses and properties were sent down from Drury Lane, and fifteen hundred people, including many lords and dukes, poured into the little town. But the Stratfordians, who had not yet practically experienced the blessings of being the fellow townsmen of a mighty genius, were opposed to the affair, and would not give the slightest assistance, although they were astute enough to charge a guinea for a miserable bed, and half a guinea for standing room for a horse, without straw or oats. On the first day, Garrick and the Corporation, wearing silver medals struck for the occasion, went publicly to church, where Arne's Oratorio of Judith was performed; after which there was a dinner in the Rotunda and a ball at night. The next day Odes were sung, and Garrick declaimed, and there was to have been a grand procession, but

the rain came down in torrents, the Avon rose and threatened to carry away the huge tent, in which there was a masquerade at night. As it was, the horses had to wade through the meadows knee-deep to reach it, and planks were stretched from the entrance to the floors of the carriages for the guests to alight. Such a flood had not been witnessed in that part of the country in the memory of man. Fireworks were let off, but the rain extinguished them, and the whole affair was a *fiasco*.

One of the best Foote stories is told in connection with the Jubilee. After the dinner he and Murphy were strolling on the banks of the river, when a very corpulent, richly dressed gentleman accosted them, and desired with much effusiveness to have a little conversation with so famous a wit as Mr. Foote. "Has the county of Warwick the honour of giving birth to you, Sir, as well as to Shakespeare?" inquired the cynic presently. "No," said the gentleman; "I come out of Essex." "Out of Essex!" said Foote, "and *who drove you?*"

Garrick amply compensated himself for the loss he had sustained at Stratford, by producing a sketch at Drury Lane that autumn, entitled, "The Jubilee," into which was introduced that which was to have paraded the streets of the town, the procession of all the great characters of Shakespeare's plays in their finest situations—Macbeth with the daggers, Juliet with the bowl, Ophelia,

distraught, &c. This spectacle splendidly mounted, filled Drury Lane for ninety-four nights. But from beginning to end the Jubilee was in very bad taste, and reflects no credit upon its inventor.

Yet it was not so bad as the production in 1772, of his version of *Hamlet*, in which he cut out *Osrice*, and the *Gravediggers*, and the fencing scene between the Prince and *Laertes*. "I had sworn," he said, "I would not leave the stage until I had rescued that noble play from the rubbish of the fifth act!" And yet in his day he was regarded as an idolater of *Shakespeare*! Although these alterations were received very unfavourably by the public, they kept the stage until 1780.

As the years passed on, he played less and less frequently, much of his time being spent in visits to the seats of the many noblemen and gentlemen who were proud to call him friend. When *Lacy* died in 1773, the entire management devolved upon him. His less frequent attendance at the theatre caused a relaxation of discipline; and between 1770 to 1776 the profits declined from £9,463 to £4,500. These considerations, and the advance of age, failing health, and above all the carpings of malicious critics, who began to tell him that he was too old for *Ranger* and *Hamlet*, at length warned him it was time to quit for ever the scene of his brilliant triumphs. The announcement of his farewell performances created a great sensation, people came

up to town from all parts of the country—no small undertaking in those days—and even foreigners came over to England to witness them, aristocratic admirers fought at the thronged doors for admittance and very frequently failed. He played a round of all his great parts. “Last night,” he writes in one place, “I played Abel Drugger for the last time. I thought the audience were cracked, they almost turned my brain.” Hannah More, who came up from Bristol for these representations, says :—

“I pity those who have not seen him. Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of his perfection. The more I see him the more I admire. I have seen him within these three weeks take leave of Benedick, Sir John Brute, Kitely, Abel Drugger, Archer, and Leon. It seems to me as if I was assisting at the obsequies of the different poets. I feel almost as much pain as pleasure.”

It was on the 10th of June, 1776, that he made his last appearance, as Don Felix in “The Wonder,” and never, it was said, did he play with more fire and energy, more lightness and animation. Then in a short speech, broken by tears, he wished the audience farewell, and with a long and lingering gaze upon the vast concourse before him, scarcely a face of which but was bedewed with sympathetic tears, slowly retired. “Farewell — farewell !” echoed a hundred voices choked with emotion as

he passed behind the curtain, which was never again to rise upon him. There was to have been a farce, but the audience, with a fine artistic sense, would not permit it to be played.

The entire profits of the last night he gave to the Drury Lane Fund for Decayed Actors, which had been started under his auspices ten years previously ; his various donations to this charity amounted to £5,000.* Soon after his retirement he disposed of his share of the patent to Brinsley Sheridan.

Not for long did he enjoy his leisure. Within three years afterwards there was a magnificent funeral procession to Westminster Abbey ; the line of carriages reached from the Strand to the sacred building ; the streets were crowded with spectators ; the Bishop of Rochester received the coffin, the Duke of Devonshire, the Earls Camden, Ossory, Spencer, and Lord Palmerston were pall-bearers ; Burke, Fox, and other celebrities stood beside the grave that was waiting to receive the mortal remains of the great actor. His brother George survived

* A Theatrical Fund for Decayed Actors had long been talked of, but the project first took form from an actress, Mrs. Hamilton, having in a single day been reduced by losses from comfort to destitution. An Address was published, and in three days £100 was collected. This was in 1765. Upon Garrick's return to England he at once set about establishing a similar fund for Drury Lane. Both were legalised by Act of Parliament ten years after their foundation.

him but a few days. He had always been David's factotum, and his first inquiry on entering the theatre at night was, "Has David wanted me?" Some one was remarking upon the singularity of his dying so soon after his brother. "Oh," answered Bannister, who was by, "David wanted him."

Of the respect in which Garrick was held, a proof was given not long before his death. One night he was the sole occupant of the gallery of the House of Commons during a fierce discussion between two Members; one of whom moved that he should be ordered to withdraw. Burke sprang up indignantly and opposed the motion to expel the man who, he said, had taught them all they knew; Fox and Townshend followed, in the same strain of eulogy, calling him their preceptor. He was sadly missed at Hampton, for the poor lost in him a kind friend; his benefactions to them were continually increasing. A few years before his death he instituted an annual feast for the children.

He left behind a fortune of one hundred thousand pounds.

Mrs. Garrick survived her husband many years, honoured and respected by all who knew her. She was once visited at Hampton by Queen Charlotte, who finding her engaged in peeling onions, took up a knife and joined her. The Prince of Wales and his brothers made frequent calls at the villa. On

the 1st of October, 1822, Elliston had invited her to a private view of Drury Lane, which he had just re-decorated. While preparing for the visit a servant handed her a cup of tea, but she had scarcely put it to her lips when she fell back and expired. She was ninety-eight years old.

Garrick was the author of several original pieces, as well as of alterations of Shakespeare, Wycherly, Beaumont and Fletcher, &c., about forty in all; and some of the finest parts of "The Clandestine Marriage." He is accredited, with the conceptions of Lord Ogleby and Mrs. Heidelberg, with half the second act, a portion of the fourth, and the whole of the fifth. Of his other works, "Romeo and Juliet" and "High Life Below Stairs" alone keep the stage; although many, more especially "Lethe," "The Country Girl," "Miss in Her Teens," and "The Lying Valet," were great favourites for many years after his death. Without rising to any particular excellence, most of them are clever and vivacious. He also wrote about one hundred prologues and epilogues, and even Johnson acknowledged, that although Dryden had written superior ones, Garrick had written more good prologues than even "glorious John."

As a conversationalist he was inferior only to Foote, and the inferiority was well compensated for by his good nature. "Garrick's conversation," said Johnson, "is gay and grotesque. It is a dish

of all sorts, but all good things." But he adds that it wanted solidity and sentiment, although in the latter he was very powerful and pleasing at times. Yet a smart repartee would silence him for the whole evening; he must take the lead, and could not bear interruption. So great was his vivacity, that Johnson said, "it drove away the thoughts of death from any association with him." His private character was excellent. To again quote the old Leviathan, who so loved to have a fling at him: "He had a mind seasoned with pious reverence. . . . He was a very good man, the cheerfulest man of his age; a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness."

"Nature," says Richard Cumberland, "had done so much for him that he could not help being an actor. His eye was so penetrating, so speaking, his brow so movable, and all his features so plastic and so accommodating, that wherever his mind impelled them they would go, and before his tongue could give the text his countenance would express the spirit and passion of the part he was charged with."

Charles Dibdin, in his "History of the Stage," draws a picture of Garrick's personal characteristics with a most graphic, if severe pencil:—

"Whether he condescended at his own levée to smile at a borrowing actor who was praising his

poetry, cut jokes with Beckett the bookseller, explain an unintelligible passage to Phil Butler the carpenter, blame Hopkins the prompter for having the gout because he was at the expense of chair hire, rebuke Messink, the pantomime trick maker, for attempting to be witty like him, chuckle at newspaper criticisms that he intended to buy off, or burn cards and letters of dukes, lords, judges, and bishops to strike his dependants with awe and admiration. Whether at Court he honoured men of title with the hopes of bolstering up the reputation of some dramatic brat produced with the assistance of the chaplain, whether ladies were promised that their friends should be disappointed of boxes that had never been let, or that the new fashion they last produced should be noticed in the next epilogue, or that an epitaph on a favourite parrot should grace the toilet-table, or whether he appeared distressed that he could not be set down by an ambassador because he had given a prior promise to a countess-dowager.* Whether at the rehearsal of a piece, his own, he demanded an acknowledgment that every passage was the acme of perfection, or at the rehearsal of a piece not his own, he himself allowed praise in proportion as he

* His aristocratic associations, however, did not render him neglectful of others, he always kept well with his City friends, was member of a City club, and was frequently to be seen at City coffee-houses.

was permitted to make alterations ; or, to be brief, in whatever manner by managing, not the minds, for many of them were too ponderous for him to wield, but the tempers of men, both of the first worldly and professional distinction, he so played his part as to be courted, caressed, admired, and looked up to by rank and talent, with very slight pretensions to the character of eminent abilities himself, otherwise than as an actor."

Strange as it may sound, a contemporary says :

"Garrick's misfortune was, he had never due confidence in his talents, his love of fame was unbounded, but 'it was tremblingly alive all o'er;' he lived in a whispering gallery, always listening and always anxious about himself; upon such a disposition, they who lacquied after him could make what impression they pleased, a word was sufficient, he took fire at the slightest hint, and they who had sinister purposes to answer saw the avenues by which they were obliged to approach him."

He was perpetually acting, whether upon the stage, in his own house, in the houses of his friends, or even in the streets. He would suddenly stop in the midst of a public thoroughfare and look up at the sky, as though he saw something remarkable, until a crowd gathered about him, then he would turn away with the wild stare of insanity. He could not sit down to have his hair dressed without terrifying the barber by making his face assume

every shade of expression, from the deepest tragic gloom to the vacancy of idiotcy ; and so plastic were his features, that it is said he could draw them into the exact representation of any person familiar to him. His enemies ascribed these freaks to a restless egotism that must always be conspicuous, but might they not rather have arisen from the over exuberant animal spirits of "the cheerfulest man of his age." When Johnson said hyperbolically that his death eclipsed the gaiety of nations, he was probably thinking as much of the private man as of the actor.

CHAPTER III.

CHARLES MACKLIN.

His Early Adventures—Original Ideas upon Acting—Engaged by Rich—Sadler's Wells in the Last Century—A Man About Town—Victimised—His Quarrel and Reconciliation with Quin—"The Jew that Shakespeare Drew"—His Quarrel with Garrick—Turns Innkeeper and Lecturer—Foote's Witticisms upon the Subjects—Bankruptcy—A Dramatic Author—A Riot—His Characteristics—His Law Suits—Proposes to turn Farmer at eighty-five—"The Man of the World"—Anecdotes of Macklin's Longevity—His Last Appearance upon the Stage—Anecdotes of his Last Years—A Wonderful "Cram."

MACKLIN'S career extended through so many generations, commencing as it did among the contemporaries of Betterton, and not terminating until the Kemble school was firmly established, that it is a little difficult to decide the exact era in stage history to which he belongs. As an actor, he stands alone; he followed no school, although but for the appearance of Garrick he might have founded one, for he certainly anticipated his great rival in introducing a more natural style of acting.

The year of Macklin's birth is believed, from contemporary recollections, to have been 1690. But there were no registers in those times, and in his latter days, and no wonder, he was a little confused upon the point, usually referring to his

daughter, who, he used to say, had a better memory for dates than he had. The lady, from a feminine weakness perhaps, fixed a later date, but the weight of evidence, into the particulars of which I have no space to enter, is against her. His real name was M'Laughlin, abbreviated afterwards, to suit Saxon tongues, to Macklin. His family claimed to be descended from some of the kings of Ireland. He was born two months before the battle of the Boyne, in which his father was engaged on the side of King James, and at which his mother was present. In the flight the poor infant was carried away in a "kish" (one of two wicker baskets placed across a horse's back, in which to carry provisions). His first recollections were of living with his father and mother on a small farm in Ulster. An uncle, a Catholic priest, undertook his education, but finding his pupil too obstreperous, gave up the attempt in despair; after which a lady took him into her house, where at nine years old he played *Monimia*, in "*The Orphan*," in some private theatricals, and so made his first step in his future profession. At fourteen he was apprenticed to a saddler, but did not take at all kindly to the business. There is a story told by one of his biographers of his running away from Dublin, where he was apprenticed, and in company with some other scapegraces coming over to London; of his lodging at a low tavern in Southwark, where he

became such an attraction to the house by his wit, songs, and powers of mimicry, that the landlady, a middle-aged widow, trepanned him, boy as he was, into a marriage, performed by some hedge-parson; but by and by his uncle, discovering his whereabouts, came over, carried him off from this harpy, and home again.

Soon he gave up the saddlery business and engaged as a badgeman at Trinity College, Dublin, where he recommended himself to the rollicking students by the same talents that had won the favour of the Southwark widow. When about twenty he turned stroller, and played in barns both in Ireland and England, with a brogue that must have sounded rather peculiar in high tragedy, which he affected. But there was promise and originality about the uneducated, ill-trained Irish lad, who had ideas of his own about acting which did not at all coincide with those of his contemporaries.

After years of this vagabondage, he, in 1725, procured an engagement with Rich, and appeared at Lincoln's Inn Fields, as Alcander in "Cedipus." The manager did not approve of the aforesaid ideas. "I spoke so familiar," Macklin used to say when relating the story, "and so little in the hoity-toity tone of the tragedy of that day, that he told me I had better go to grass for another year or two." So he went back to strolling, played tragedy at

Southwark Fair and harlequin at Sadler's Wells, of which last-named place in after years he used to relate anecdotes which give strange pictures of the age.

"I remember the time," he would say, "when the price of admission there was threepence, except a few places scuttled off at the sides of the stage at sixpence, reserved for people of fashion who occasionally came to see the fun. Here we smoked and drank porter and rum and water, as much as we could pay for, and every man had his doxy that liked it; and though we had a very odd mixture of company (for I believe it was a good deal the baiting place of thieves and highwaymen), there was little or no rioting. There was a public there, Sir, that kept one another in awe. The entertainments consisted of hornpipes, ballad-singing, pantomime ballet, and some lofty tumbling, and all done by daylight, and there were four or five exhibitions daily. There was a fellow posted outside, who, when he thought there was enough people collected for a second exhibition, used to come into the house and shout out, 'Is Hiram Fisteman here?' This was the signal agreed upon, upon which they concluded the entertainment with a song, dismissed that audience, and prepared for a second representation."

From London he returned to the provinces. A jovial boon companion, who could take his two or

three bottles, a famous player at fives, a general lover, a formidable boxer, a great pedestrian, he was a favourite wherever he went. In 1730 we find him back at Lincoln's Inn, still holding an inferior position. But by degrees he was winning his way in managerial and public favour. He was a well-known man about town—that is, the town of the theatres; at the taverns and coffee-houses of Covent Garden; at the shilling and sixpenny ordinaries of Clare Market—where there were private rooms for the gentry and nobility; among the butchers of that neighbourhood—persons of great theatrical importance in those days, staunch friends of the players, and ever ready to give their formidable presence in the gallery when riots were apprehended; among “the Derby Captains,”* Marlborough's disbanded officers, whose limited means rendered them constant frequenters of the cheap ordinaries, with an eye to the buxom landladies, especially the widows. He was one of the St. Alban's Club, the peculiar feature of which was that the members walked once a week from London to dine at the Abbey town, and back again the same day—no bad pedestrian feat, by the way.

Leaving Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1733, he joined Fleetwood's company at Drury Lane, where he appeared as Captain Brazen, in “The Recruiting

* So called from their chiefly frequenting a tavern in Covent Garden where a cheap beer called Derbyshire ale was sold.

Officer," and as Teague, in "The Committee," with considerable success. About two years afterwards he married a Miss Grace Purvor, who under his instruction became a very clever actress of comic and old women's characters. In the meantime he and his manager, being something of kindred spirits, became great cronies; and Theophilus Cibber, who had hitherto held the post, being deposed, he became his chief adviser. "And," says Victor, "he was a man of capabilities sufficient to raise him to the office of Lord High Cardinal." But these favours were not without serious drawbacks. Fleetwood, although a gentleman by birth, was a coarser Sheridan, pleasant and fascinating in manners, but addicted to low company, a spend-thrift not particular as to whom he victimised. Macklin had to pay dearly for his friendship; Fleetwood often borrowed of him small sums, such as thirty or forty pounds, without ever repaying them.

"This," says the actor, "was usually after a snug benefit night, and sometimes after a lucky run at play (for I was a gambler, Sir, at that time). I did not much mind to press him for, considering them as nest eggs in his hands, and as a kind of security for my engagements at his theatre, which even at that time were considerable: but I soon found I was a chicken in point of worldly knowledge to my chief: whilst I thought I was teaching

myself in my profession, he was plotting my ruin; not that he had any particular antipathy to me, Sir, far from it, but somebody was to save him from a temporary embarrassment, and I was found to be the most convenient scapegoat."

At length Fleetwood prevailed upon him to be his bond for three thousand pounds. But as time went on, and more and more of the unscrupulous character of the man for whom he had so heavily engaged himself was revealed to Macklin, he began to get uneasy. One night while Fleetwood was conducting the Prince of Wales by torchlight round Bartholomew Fair, Macklin, who had been away in the provinces, looking pale and excited, his clothes in great disorder, suddenly appeared before him. He said he had been arrested for debt at Bristol, had broken out of his prison and killed the jailor, but that if he were released of that bond for three thousand he could compromise with his creditor; and it must be done at once. Fearful of a disturbance in the presence of the Prince, Fleetwood promised to meet him in an hour at a certain tavern in Clare Market. Knowing the violent character of the man with whom he had to deal, he kept his word, and finding another victim—Paul Whitehead, who ultimately had to pay the entire amount—upon whom to shift the responsibility, released Macklin from his engagement. It need scarcely be added that the Bristol story was all a ruse.

On one very momentous occasion, however, Fleetwood had stood his friend ; it happened when he was arrested on a charge of murder. The fatal affair rose out of a practical joke. An actor named Hallam had taken away a wig which Macklin wore in a farce ; a quarrel ensued, and violent language on both sides : finally Macklin thrust at the other with his cane, intending to push him out of the green-room, but the point glancing upward entered the unfortunate man's eye, penetrated to the brain, and killed him upon the spot. Macklin was tried for murder at the Old Bailey. Fleetwood used all his influence for him, and the jury brought it in manslaughter, but without malice aforethought, and the actor was released.

He was known at this time by the nickname of the "Wild Irishman," and his violent temper frequently involved him in quarrels. He had one with Quin, in which, however, the latter was the aggressor, that might have had as fatal a termination as that just related. They were playing together in Wycherley's "Plain Dealer;" Quin was Manly, Macklin Jerry Blackacre. The latter, introducing some comic business in one of Manly's scenes, raised a laugh, much to the disgust of the arrogant tragedian, who, upon coming off, told him insolently not to come any of his — tricks with him. Macklin replied that he had no idea of disturbing him, and only desired to show himself off a bit. In

the next scene they had together, the laugh was repeated, and Quin again abused him. Macklin, growing a little warm, replied he could not play differently. Quin said he must and should, and the other gave him the lie direct. Upon which Quin, who was eating an apple, spit a mouthful into his hand, and threw it in the other's face. The Irish blood was boiling in a moment. Seizing hold of him, Macklin thrust him into a chair, and pummelled his face until it was so swollen he could scarcely speak. Quin demanded satisfaction, and said he would wait for him at the Obelisk in Covent Garden, after the performance. Macklin, however, had to play in the pantomime, during which Fleetwood came to him, told him he should not keep the appointment, and to prevent the meeting took him home to supper and made him sleep at his house. In the morning he advised him to end the matter by making some sort of apology to the tragedian, and Macklin won great renown by his spirited conduct towards bully Quin. But Quin never forgave him, and ever afterwards spoke of him with the most bitter malice. For years they never exchanged a word; but one day, after attending the funeral of a brother actor, Quin, Macklin, and some others retired to a tavern in Covent Garden to spend the evening. One by one their companions went away, until at six o'clock the next morning they were left alone over their cups. There was a long pause of

embarrassment on both sides, until at length Quin broke the ice and drank Macklin's health ; Macklin returned the compliment. Then after another pause Quin said, "There has been a foolish quarrel, Sir, between you and me, which, though accommodated, I must confess, I have not been able to entirely forget till now. If you can forget it give me your hand, and let us in future live together like brother actors." The reconciliation was sealed by a fresh bottle, to which another and another succeeded, until Quin became so drunk he was not able to speak or move. A chair was sent for, but could not be found. Upon which Macklin, with the assistance of a couple of waiters, raised the ponderous burden upon his back and carried it fast asleep to its lodgings under the Covent Garden Piazza.

Macklin had been some years a member of the Drury Lane company, and, although esteemed as a sound and useful actor, had made no mark. Those peculiar ideas of his concerning his art, which had so disgusted John Rich, were stronger than ever. He was not content to follow the lead of the actors of the day, to mouth and strut, and repeat the traditions of a century, he was burning to reform all this, and he and a young stage-struck fellow in the wine trade, named David Garrick, his inseparable companion, might have been seen at all times of the day walking up and down beneath the Covent Garden Piazza discussing their theories,

or in at the Bedford after the play in company with a witty spendthrift fellow about town called Samuel Foote. Casting about in his thoughts for some character especially adapted to his powers, he be-thought him of Shylock. Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice," had not been acted since 1701, a spurious version by Lord Lansdowne, called "The Jew of Venice," having usurped its place, in which Shylock was degraded to a kind of low-comedy part. Macklin, resolved to restore the original text, and imparted his ideas to Fleetwood, who, at length, in 1741, gave a reluctant consent to the revival. When it was known that he intended to play the Jew as a serious character, the actors laughed in their sleeves, and gleefully prophesied a dead failure.

His keen observation and suspicious temper could read their thoughts, and he determined to encourage their belief and render their discomfiture the greater. At rehearsal, while requesting the others to do their best, he himself went through the part tamely and ineffectively. The plot succeeded, and the performers went about saying, "This hot-headed, conceited Irishman, having got some little reputation in a few parts, is going to take advantage of the manager's favour to bring himself and the theatre into disgrace." Fleetwood being appealed to, begged him to give up the attempt. Upon which Macklin was obliged to confess the game he was playing. "I am only deceiving a set of men

who envy me," he said ; " but I'll pledge my life on the success of the play." There had been so much talk and so many predictions and arguments over this revival, that it created a considerable sensation among play-goers, and on the night of the first representation the house was crowded, and with people of fashion. From the first he could perceive that he had a firm hold upon the audience, and from the critics in the pit he could hear, " Very well, very well indeed ! " " This man seems to know what he is about."

" These encomiums," he said, " warmed but did not overset me. I knew where I should have the pull, which was in the third act, and reserved myself accordingly. At this period I threw out all my fire ; and as the contrasted passions of joy for the merchant's losses and grief for the elopement of Jessica, open a fine field for an actor's powers, I had the good fortune to please beyond my wildest expectation. The whole house was in an uproar of applause. When I went behind the scenes the manager complimented me very highly on my performance, and significantly added, ' Macklin, you were right at last.' My brethren in the green-room joined in his eulogium, but with different views. He was thinking of the increase of his treasury, they only of saving appearances—wishing at the same time I had broken my neck in the attempt. The trial scene wound up the fullness of

my reputation: here I was well listened to; and here I made such a silent yet forcible impression upon the audience that I retired from this great attempt well satisfied. On my return to the green-room after the play was over, it was crowded with nobility and critics, who all complimented me in the warmest and most unbounded manner; and the situation I felt myself in, I must confess, was one of the most flattering and intoxicating in my whole life. No money, no title could purchase what I felt. And let no man tell me after this what fame will not inspire a man to do, and how far the attainment of it will not remunerate his greatest labours. By G——, Sir, though I was not worth fifty pounds in the world at the time, yet let me tell you I was Charles the Great for that night.”

Lichtenberg, a German critic, who saw him play the part late in life, thus describes his acting:—

“Picture to yourself a somewhat portly man, with a yellowish, coarse face, a nose by no means deficient in length, breadth, or thickness, and a mouth, in the cutting of which Nature’s knife seems to have slipped as far as the ear, on one side at least, as it appeared to me. His dress is black and long, his trousers likewise long and wide; his three-cornered hat is red—I presume after the fashion of Italian Jews. The first words he speaks on coming on the stage are slow and full of import. ‘Three thousand ducats.’ The two *th*’s and the

two *s*'s, especially the last after the *t*, Macklin mouths with such unction, that one would think he were at once testing the ducats and all that could be purchased with them. This at starting at once accredits him with the audience in a way which nothing afterwards can damage. Three such words, so spoken in that situation, mark the whole character. In the scene where, for the first time he misses his daughter, he appears without his hat, with his hair standing on end, in some places at least a finger's length above the crown, as if the wind from the gallows had blown it up. Both hands are firmly clenched, and all his movements are abrupt and convulsive. To see such emotion in a grasping, fraudulent character, generally cool and self-possessed, is fearful." It is said that George II. was so impressed by this performance, that he could not sleep all night after witnessing it. The next morning, while they were holding council, Walpole happened to remark, "I wish there was some way of frightening the House of Commons." "Send them to the theatre to see that Irishman act," replied His Majesty.

Alternated with other pieces, the "*Merchant of Venice*" ran through the entire season, drawing crowded houses. Macklin received an invitation to dine with Bolingbroke, Pope, and other celebrities, at Battersea. The latter's couplet on his performance—

"This is the Jew
That Shakespeare drew,"

is well known, and upon his taking a benefit, on the nineteenth night of the run, Bolingbroke sent him a purse containing twenty guineas, such a present being then considered a compliment. He was undoubtedly the greatest Shylock that had appeared, at least since the days of Shakespeare, and remained so until Edmund Kean took up the part.

By and by Fleetwood became so deeply in debt with the actors, that there was a general revolt of the whole company. This brought about the famous quarrel between Garrick and Macklin. They were great friends at the time, and had pledged themselves to stand by each other throughout the dispute. Fleetwood, however, on account of the intimacy which had subsisted between them, was more incensed against Macklin than against any of the others; and when, after much difficulty, the quarrel was arranged, and all the revolvers were re-engaged, he made an exception to his whilom crony, and no persuasions could move him. According to their agreement, Macklin considered that Garrick should not, under such conditions, have gone back to the theatre; and, according to the strict code of honour, he was probably right; but, on the other hand, it would not have been just to have sacrificed a body of people, and, without the attraction of

the great star, there was no hope of success, for one man, more especially as Garrick offered to find an engagement for Macklin's wife, provide for him in Ireland, and make up to him what was deficient of the Drury Lane salary out of his own pocket. But the hot-headed Irishman would listen to no terms except his bond. He went about everywhere detailing his grievances, and exciting sympathy, and on the opening night the theatre was filled with his friends. Garrick's appearance upon the stage was the signal for a general uproar ; hisses, groans, and " Off, off !" sounded on all sides, while showers of apples, rotten eggs, and peas, were hurled at him. To such a height did the riot proceed that the curtain had to be dropped, and the performance terminated. The next night the manager brought to his aid the *élite* of Hockley-in-the-Hole, and all the pugilists he could muster. Just before the curtain rose, Broughton, a celebrated prize-fighter of the day, stood up in the pit and addressed the house. " Gentlemen," he said, " I'm told some persons have come here with the intention of interrupting the play ; now I have come to hear it, and have paid my money, and I advise those who have come with such a view to go away and not hinder my diversion." This speech caused a tremendous uproar, there was a free fight between the rival parties, but the " bruisers " got the best of it,

cleared the pit of the enemy, and the performance proceeded.

Macklin published a statement of the affair, and scattered handbills filled with abuse of Garrick, and calling upon the public to take up the quarrel. All this would be considered very absurd nowadays, but it caused a considerable stir then, when the theatre was an institution, when it was said there were four estates—the King, the Lords, the Commons, and the Theatres. Macklin never forgave Garrick for this business—although as soon as the latter became one of the managers of Drury Lane, he engaged both him and his wife—and his witty and sarcastic sayings have done as much to fasten upon the great actor the charge of meanness and rapacity as have those of Foote. Barred out of the patent theatres, he opened the Haymarket in the Summer of 1744, and it was during that season Samuel Foote made his first appearance—as Othello (!) to Macklin's Iago. The company was a scratch one, half composed of amateurs, his pupils, of whom Foote was one; for Macklin had started the art which has so many professors in our days—the art of teaching acting. He also gave lectures on elocution.

In the following winter, Fleetwood relented and took him back; but that he had to eat humble pie is evident from a prologue written by himself, which he delivered on his opening night, previous

to the "Merchant of Venice," which was judiciously chosen for his reappearance. Here are the first lines of the address:—

"From scheming, pelting, famine, and despair,
Behold, to grace restored, an exiled player;
Your sanction yet his fortune must complete,
And give him privilege to laugh and eat.
No revolution plots are mine again;
You see, thank heav'n, the quietest of men.
I pray that all domestic feuds might cease,
And, beggared by the war, solicit peace," etc.

Macklin was never long constant to any theatre. Unconciliating in his manner, and suspicious and jealous in his disposition, it was a difficult matter to make him draw quietly in the team; but when he found the least difficulty thrown in his way he became restive and ungovernable. The elder Sheridan, then manager of the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, caught him in one of these moods in the spring of 1748, after his first season under Garrick's management at Drury Lane, and made him and his wife the offer of £800 per year for two years. So tempting an offer was at once accepted. But he had been at Dublin scarcely a month when he found out that the manager chose to perform in tragedy as well as comedy, and that his name was printed in larger type in the playbills. This excited his discontent, and he became so intolerable that at last Sheridan shut the doors against him, and gave orders that neither himself nor wife

should be again admitted. Macklin commenced a Chancery suit, and after waiting about the whole winter, returned to England minus some hundred pounds, and with a law-suit upon his shoulders.

In 1753 he resolved to retire from the stage. Garrick gave him the use of Drury Lane for his farewell benefit, and wrote a prologue. It was on this occasion he formally introduced his daughter to the public, although she had previously appeared as Jane Shore and Lady Townley. Macklin was a victim to new ideas: he was always conceiving some wonderful scheme by which he was to make his fortune, and render himself happy ever more. From the incubation of such ideas to their parturition he knew no rest. The craze on this occasion was to become a licensed victualler, the landlord of a tavern under the Covent Garden Piazza, upon what is now the site of the Tavistock Hotel, and to open a school of Oratory, which he called "The British Inquisition." The advertisement by which the latter undertaking was heralded is so extraordinary, that it is worth transcribing:—

"At Macklin's Great Room in Hart Street, Covent Garden, this day, being the 21st of November, will be opened

"THE BRITISH INQUISITION.

"This Institution is upon the plan of the ancient Greek, Roman, and modern French and Italian societies of liberal investigation. Such subjects in arts, sciences, literature, criticism, philosophy, history, politics, and morality as shall be found useful and enter-

taining to society will be there lectured upon and freely debated ; particularly Mr. Macklin intends to lecture upon the Comedy of the Ancients, the use of their masks and flutes, their mimes and pantomimes, and the use and abuse of the stage. He will likewise lecture upon the rise and progress of the modern Theatres, and make a comparison between them and those of Greece and Rome, and between each other he proposes also to lecture upon each of Shakespeare's plays ; to consider the original stories whence they are taken ; the artificial or inartificial use, according to the laws of the drama, that Shakespeare has made of them ; his fable, moral character, passion, manners, will likewise be criticised, and how his capital characters have been acted heretofore, are acted, and ought to be acted. And as the design of this inquiry is to endeavour at an acquisition of truth in matters of taste, particularly theatrical, the lecture being ended any gentleman may offer his thoughts upon the subject.

"The doors will be open at five, the lecture begin precisely at seven o'clock, every Monday and Friday evening.

"There is a public ordinary every day at four o'clock, price three shillings, each person to drink port, claret, or whatever liquor he shall choose."

Now, as Macklin understood nothing of Greek and Latin, he could not discourse very learnedly upon the classical drama ; as his knowledge of French was not sufficient to even read the language, he could not obtain much assistance from that next best source ; and as he was totally ignorant of the contemporary literature of Shakespeare, he could scarcely be expected to throw much light upon the originals of his plots. The whole affair consequently degenerated into something very like burlesque, which was greatly intensified by the portentous gravity with which Macklin, attired in full

dress, gave forth his nothings. The wits made merry over it, more especially Foote, who, always on the alert for new topics of satire, used regularly to attend these lectures and join in the discussion that followed, exercising his wit so freely upon the lecturer, that by and bye he became the chief attraction of the place. One night the subject of the discourse was on the cause of the prevalence of duelling in Ireland. The lecturer, tracing back the early history of the country, had got as far as Elizabeth, when Foote rose up and intimated that he desired to say something. "Well, Sir, and what have you to say upon this subject?" demanded Macklin. "Only to crave a little attention. I think I can settle the point in a few words," replied Foote. "What o'clock is it?" "What has that to do with the question, Sir?" "Everything; will you please to answer me?" Very much annoyed, Macklin pulled out his watch, and told him it was half-past ten. "Very well," pursued Foote, "about this time every gentleman in Ireland who can possibly afford it is in his third bottle of claret, and in a fair way of getting drunk; from drunkenness he proceeds to quarrelling, from quarrelling to duelling, and there's an end of the chapter." Amidst the laughter that followed, Macklin in great dudgeon shut up his book, and brought the lecture to a close. In the following summer Foote gave burlesque lectures, *à la* Macklin, at the Haymarket.

A description of one will give the reader an idea of all. Macklin had, in one of his discourses, asserted that the Greek dramatic construction was perfectly applicable to the modern tragedy; an idea which Foote ridiculed in this manner. He supposed a drama in which all London was struck with terror at the sudden appearance of a superhuman-looking being, attended by a chorus of tinkers, tailors, blacksmiths, bakers, and other trades, and who held forth interminably upon his omnipotence, threatened everybody and everything with fire and sword for no understandable reason, and announced his intention of destroying the Tower, reducing the City to slavery, and deposing the King; upon which the chorus of traders fell upon their knees, tore their hair, beat their breasts, and entreated this terrible individual to forego his dreadful purpose. This would end the first act; the remaining four would be devoted to the struggle of his contending passions; in the end he would agree to their request, the curtain would fall to a hymn of thanksgiving, and to the cheers from pit and gallery, to testify British appreciation of an entertainment so admirably suited to their tastes. On another occasion Foote represented Macklin sitting in his chair examining his pupils in the classics. After asserting that Aristophanes, Cicero, and Roscius, were all inferior to their instructor, he wound up with the following charge:—"Now, Sir,

remember, I, Charles Macklin, tell you, there are no good plays among the ancients, and only one great one among the moderns, and that is the 'Merchant of Venice;' and there's only one part in that, and only one man that can play it. Now, Sir, as you have been very attentive, I'll tell you an anecdote of that play. When a royal personage, who shall be nameless, witnessed my performance of the Jew, he sent for me to his box, and remarked, 'Sir, if I were not the Prince—ha—hum—you understand, I should wish to be Mr. Macklin.' Upon which, I answered, 'Royal Sir, being Mr. Macklin, I do not desire to be the ——' At this point, one night, Macklin, who was standing at the back unobserved, interrupted with, "No, I'll be d——d if I said that."

From the lecture-room let us take a glimpse at the tavern. Dinner was announced by public advertisement to be ready at four o'clock, and as the clock struck the hour a bell affixed at the top of the house was rung for five minutes. Ten minutes afterwards the dinner was served, and then the room door was closed and no other person was admitted. Macklin himself, in full dress, always brought in the first dish, then with a low bow retired to the sideboard, where he remained with his two principal waiters, one on each side of him. He had been training the servants for months previously; they were not allowed to open their lips

save to answer the guests, and they communicated with each other while in the room only by signs. "From whom do you think I picked up those signs?" he inquired of Foote one day. "Can't say, I'm sure," was the reply. "From no less a person than James, Duke of York, who, you know, Sir, first invented signs for the Fleet." "And it will be very good poetical justice," responded the wit, "as from the fleet they were taken, so to the *Fleet* [prison] both master and signals are likely to return!" His jest was prophetic. Macklin left all the business department to his servants, who robbed him right and left, and brought him at length, in 1755, to bankruptcy. He continued for some little time to give instructions in acting, and aspirants were invited to give specimens of their powers at his house between the hours of ten and twelve daily. Were a man solely bent upon witnessing the most absurd side of human vanity, he could not have hit upon a better plan of gratifying his fancy than by issuing such an invitation. Macklin was quite serious, but some ludicrous anecdotes are told of his experiences. One day he remarked that a gentleman, who was giving his idea of Othello, while violently gesticulating with his left arm, kept the other immovable. Upon asking the reason, Macklin discovered that his right arm had been amputated. Fancy a one-armed Othello! On one occasion Macklin received a letter from a gentle-

man, stating that as his voice and appearance were eminently feminine, he should like to study for that line of characters, thinking he would be a great success. Macklin desired him to call upon him; he did so, and turned out to be a full-blooded nigger. Another stated his desire to play the cock in "Hamlet!"*

Both the Ordinary and "The British Inquisition" being failures, Macklin sought about for a new idea. It appeared in the form of a scheme to build a new theatre in Dublin, in which he induced Barry, the actor, to join. He went over to Ireland to overlook the work, and full of his recent studies pestered the workmen so much about the way in which the ancient Greek theatres were constructed that they could not get on with the work. Ere it could be opened he had quarrelled with Barry about parts: he desired to alternate the leading characters of tragedy, the Macbeths and Hamlets, with him. Barry, perfectly aware that he would fail in them, objected; the other insisted, and the end of the matter was that the partnership was dissolved, and he was engaged only as an actor. Macklin has been praised for his correct

* Not so absurd an ambition then as it may seem to us. Sir Jonas Barrington says that in Dublin an actor was always employed to crow in the ghost scene in "Hamlet," that great value was set upon this part, which was always severely criticised by the gallery.

judgment, but it certainly did not extend to a just estimate of his own capabilities, or he would never have played Mercutio, as he did once, or have desired to appear in "Macbeth" or "Hamlet." The new Crow Street Theatre was opened in October, 1758, but by December, 1759 we find him entering into an engagement with the opposition house. It was never fulfilled, however, and he went back to Drury Lane at a large salary.

He now appears in a new character—that of dramatic author. As early as 1745, he had produced a piece entitled "Henry VII., or the Popish Impostor," upon the subject of Perkin Warbeck. It was an extraordinary production, in which Henry was represented as a Protestant champion, and Warbeck as the representative of the Papacy. It had had as great a success as it deserved. But in December 1759, he produced in Dublin his farcical comedy of "Love à la Mode," and soon afterwards a very similar work, entitled "The True Born Irishman," intended to ridicule the absurd affectations of Irish ladies upon their return from England. Both pieces were very successful. With his usual restlessness he soon migrated from the Crow Street Theatre to that in Smock Alley, where in 1764 he brought out a two-act farce entitled "The True Born Scotchman," afterwards elaborated into the famous comedy of "The Man of the World." There is a curious story told of the first run of this

piece. One morning a young Scotch nobleman, who stood high in favour at the Castle, sent Macklin a handsome suit of laced-dress clothes, with a letter, in which he begged his acceptance of that present as a small mark of the pleasure he had received from the exhibition of so fine a picture of his grandfather! The next season he returned to Crow Street—and to England in 1767. Then back again to Ireland, alternating between Crow Street and Smock Alley, as he quarrelled with one and made friends with the other manager.

In 1772 he opened a correspondence with Colman, preparatory to commencing an engagement at Covent Garden, one of the principal stipulations of which was that he should perform *Richard*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*, parts which he had never yet played in London, but in which, being now eighty-three, he was ambitious of appearing. The treaty was concluded. But soon afterwards, Smith, who had been disappointed of an engagement elsewhere, joined the company. He was in possession of the leading tragedy parts, and Colman found some difficulty in adjusting the claims of the rival tragedians. At length it was arranged that they should alternate the parts, as Garrick and Barry had done in previous seasons. But as soon as Smith heard that Macklin was to open in *Richard*, he claimed that privilege. This was the beginning of a quarrel that led to serious consequences. Macklin was certainly

unfitted for such parts, and the only one of the three he obtained was *Macbeth*, which, under his direction, was produced with an approach to correctness in scenery, costume, and adjuncts never before attempted. Garrick's scarlet coat was discarded, and for the first time *Macbeth* appeared in the dress of a Highland chieftain, which was retained until Charles Kean's great revival of the tragedy. Macklin's figure was never calculated to represent the dignity of a warrior, and in his first scene, when the audience saw a clumsy old man, who looked more like a Scotch piper than a great general, stumping down the stage at the head of a supposed conquering army, it impressed them only with a sense of the ridiculous and absurd. There were some notable points in the last act, especially his speech to the messenger who brings him news that Birnam Wood is moving—"If thou speak'st false," &c.—the terrible menace of which is said to have terrified the audience. But on the whole the performance seems to have been rather a lecture upon the part than a theatrical representation. Arthur Murphy, praising its correctness, judgment, and energy, happily styled it "A black letter copy of *Macbeth*."

In the meantime the quarrel between the rivals was daily assuming greater proportions, and others were soon involved in it. Macklin accused Reddish and Sparks, two members of the company,

of hissing him from the gallery ; then followed summonses before magistrates, affidavits published in the newspapers, which were full of squibs and paragraphs. He made speeches from the stage, and acted with such violence in the matter that the public took up the cudgels against him, and resolved to drive him from the stage. The night fixed upon for this enterprise was that on which he was to appear in his great part of Shylock. The house was crowded to the ceiling, and when the curtain drew up there was a cry for Colman to appear ; Bensley, one of the actors, came forward, but the audience would not listen to him. As Macklin, dressed for Shylock, advanced from the side scenes, and humbly supplicated to be heard, the riot became so furious that he was obliged to retire. After this he came on in his own clothes, but they would not allow him to speak—the cry was still for Colman. Macklin was on and off every two minutes, and when he was told that it was the desire of the audience he should never play there again, he treated it with so much contempt that they declared they would tear up the benches if the manager did not come forward. Then Bensley appeared carrying a board, on which was chalked, “At the command of the public, Mr. Macklin is discharged.” This was greeted with a roar of applause. But the attempt to substitute “*She Stoops to Conquer*” for the play announced

brought forth more cries for Colman, who was at length compelled to appear to save his theatre from being wrecked. He asked the audience if it was their pleasure that Mr. Macklin should be discharged. There was a tremendous shout of "Yes!" "Then he is discharged," said Colman. They would accept of no entertainment proposed, and at length the money taken at the doors was returned, and the proceedings of the evening were brought to a close. Macklin must have rendered himself very obnoxious both on and off the stage to have excited such an uncompromising combination against him. We can very well understand it, however, after reading Holcroft's description of his character; which, if drawn with a harsh pencil, is no doubt strikingly accurate.

"Macklin's body," he says, "like his mind, was cast in a mould as rough as it was durable; his aspect and address confounded his inferiors, and the delight he took in making others fear and admire him gave him an aversion from the society of those whose knowledge exceeded his own. Nor was he ever heard to allow superiority in any man. He had no respect for the modesty of youth or sex, but would say the most discouraging as well as the grossest things; and felt pleasure in proportion to the pain he gave. It was common for him to ask his pupils why they did not rather think of becoming bricklayers than players. He was impatient of

contradiction to an extreme; and, when he found fault, if the person attempted to answer, he stopped him without hearing, by saying, 'Ha! you have always a reason for being in the wrong!' This impatience carried him still further—it often rendered him exceedingly abusive; blockhead, fool, scoundrel, were familiar expressions with him. His passions were so irritable that the least opposition was construed into an unpardonable insult—and the want of immediate apprehension in his pupils subjected them to the most galling contempt. His judgment, however, was in general sound, and his instructions those of a master." He was as remarkable for his pauses as the Kembles, and he had reduced them to a system; there were three—the moderate, the long, and the grand pause. While making the last, one night, the prompter, thinking he had forgotten his part, gave him the word; finding he still remained silent, he prompted louder; still Macklin did not speak, and the third time the prompter's voice was heard distinctly in front; upon which, boiling with fury, Macklin rushed off the stage and knocked the man down; then returning to the footlights, said coolly, by way of explanation, "The fellow interrupted me in my grand pause."

Of his brusqueness, to give it the mildest name, many amusing anecdotes are told; as, for instance, when dining in company with an Irish parson, he

suddenly turned round, and addressing him, demanded dictatorially, "Now, Sir, what is your opinion of Terence's plays?" "Do you *mane* the Latin edition?" inquired the parson with a strong Milesian accent. "Do you think I *mane* the Irish and be d—d to you?" Imagine the horror and indignation of the reverend gentleman. As a set off, however, against these harsher features of his character, Macklin was a man of the strictest integrity, and whatever might be his circumstances, discharged every obligation with the utmost punctuality; there are many stories told of his benevolence and generosity, which redound greatly to his honour.

But to return to the riots. Macklin plunged with all his love of litigation, heart and soul into a law-suit, and brought a charge of conspiracy against Smith, Reddish, Sparks, and several non-professional gentlemen who had aided and abetted them. The trial lasted some time, and judgment was delivered by Lord Mansfield in favour of Macklin, who, however, having gained his point, manifested no vindictiveness towards the offenders, and let them off under the curious stipulation that in addition to paying his law expenses they should take three hundred pounds worth of tickets—one hundred for his daughter's benefit, another for his own, and a third for the manager's. "Mr. Macklin," said the judge, "I have always seen you play with

merit, but you never acted so admirably as you have to-day."

His banishment from the London stage lasted nearly three years, which he passed playing in the provinces, in Ireland, and in Scotland. He reappeared for Miss Macklin's benefit in 1775 as Shylock, and Sir Archy Macsarcasm in "*Love à la Mode*;" and afterwards as Richard (at last!). But he now commenced an action against the managers of Covent Garden for the breach of engagement caused by his sudden dismissal, and claimed all arrears of salary from that time. The suit was continued several years, and believing he understood every matter better than any one else, he undertook to answer all his bills in Chancery. On these occasions he gave notice to his family to have a fire kept up in his study, and that he was not to be interrupted, on any account whatever, till he chose to be visible. When he commenced business he locked himself up in this room, to which everything he required was brought, but in dumb show, no person being permitted to speak to him. Here also he slept, and whenever a thought struck him in the night he would jump out of bed and sit down to his desk. This suit also ended in a victory for him; which he used with even greater generosity than his previous one, for upon the damages—five hundred pounds—being paid to him, he handed the sum back to Mr. Harris, saying he was quite content with having

established his legal rights, and that he trusted there would be no more ill blood between them.

When he was about eighty-five, he conceived the extraordinary whim of turning farmer, and actually used his best endeavours to procure a farm of three or four hundred acres in the neighbourhood of Cork. "I have read books on agriculture," he remarked to a friend, "and know the theory of farming better than half the bailiffs in England. I would act in Dublin in the Winter, make engagements in England for the Spring, be on my farm in the Summer, and appear occasionally in Cork." Luckily for himself he could not procure a farm, and so the project, like so many others, fell through. Verily he must have thought he was going to rival the longevity of the patriarchs. And not without cause, for at nearly ninety he was as vigorous and full of spirits as ever, could sing a good song, tell a good story, and take his bottle better than half the young men he associated with. He used in company to give some extraordinary illustrations of his great age. "Oh lord, Sir," he said one evening to a gentleman to whom he was relating some reminiscences, "I remember so many changes in human affairs that in some families I have almost lost the power of tracing their descent. An odd circumstance happened to me a few years ago upon this subject. A party of Irish gentlemen, who had come over here in the parliamentary vacation, asked

me to sup with them. I did so, Sir, and we all got very jolly together: insomuch that one of them was so drunk that I made a point of taking him on my back and carrying him down stairs to his chair. The next day the gentleman waited on me, and expressing his civilities, said he was sorry I should take so much unnecessary trouble. Here, Sir, I stopped him short by telling him that one reason I had for carrying him on my back, was that I carried either his father or his grandfather the same way, fifty years ago, when he was a student at the Middle Temple." "Very true, Sir," he answered: "I remember my father often telling it as a family story; but you are mistaken a little in point of genealogy, it was my *great-grandfather* that you did that kindness for."

In 1781, he returned to England for the purpose of producing his "True Born Scotchman," which had never yet been played out of Ireland, and which he had long since elaborated into a five-act comedy. The manuscript had lain at the Lord Chamberlain's office nearly ten years, and Macklin despaired of having it returned to him, when one day, dining with Sir Fletcher Norton and Mr. Dunning, he begged their opinions as to what a man should do to recover property when he knew by whom it was detained. They advised an action of Trover. "Well," said Macklin, "the case is my own. Will you two undertake my cause?" They agreed. He

explained the case, and by personal application they got back the play, but with a refusal to license it under its then title, it being considered as a reflection upon the Scottish nation. Upon which Macklin changed the title to "The Man of the World." The comedy was highly successful, and Macklin's performance of Sir Pertinax was a masterpiece, being peculiarly suited to his style. When he first appeared in this character in England he was over ninety years of age.

It was not until 1785 that he finally gave over his wandering life, and settled down permanently in London. But even then he arranged to act occasionally at Covent Garden. His first wife was dead, and he had married again; his daughter was dead, so was his son, yet still he remained green and vigorous. In 1788 his memory began to fail him for the first time. Yet he still acted.

His last appearance upon the stage was on the 7th of May 1789, in the character of Shylock, and for his own benefit. The manager from the first feared a collapse, yet knowing the old man's necessities did not like to prohibit his appearance; as a precaution, however, he had another actor, Ryder, ready dressed for the part. When Macklin entered the green-room, attired with all his usual neatness and precision, he gazed about until his eye fell upon Mrs. Pope. "My dear, are you to play to-night?" he asked. "To be sure I am, Sir. Don't you see

I am dressed for Portia?" "True, but who is to play Shylock?" he inquired with a vacant look. "Why, you, to be sure," she answered. Then he recollected himself, and putting his hand to his forehead, exclaimed pathetically, "God help me, I'm afraid my memory has left me!" He went on the stage, however, and delivered the first two or three speeches of Shylock, but in such a manner that it was evident he did not understand what he was saying. After a while he recovered a little and seemed to make an effort to rouse himself; but in vain—there was a pause—then he came forward and addressed the audience, telling them he found himself unable to proceed, and that he hoped they would accept his substitute.

Even after this, the tenor of his life was much as usual: he continued his morning walks, seizing upon old acquaintances by the arm or button-hole, and while holding forth upon some favourite topic with tremendous energy, lowering upon them his shaggy brows until he looked like a tiger peeping out of a bush; his visits to the afternoon club, and to the theatre. When he appeared at the pit-door, however great the crowd might be, everybody made way for him until he reached his accustomed seat, which no one ever thought of depriving him of, the centre of the bench next to the orchestra. If he could not hear distinctly he would rise up and address the actor with, "Sir, speak louder, I cannot

hear you." When the Prince and Princess of Wales paid their first visit to the theatre after their marriage, he rose with the rest of the audience upon their entrance. The Prince singled him out and bowed to him, and the Princess did the same, to the old man's intense delight, and for days he could talk of nothing else. Gradually he sank into a state of imbecility, and at times laboured under the delusion that everybody, especially his servants, was wronging him. More than once he hurried off to Bow Street to appeal to the magistrates against them; but ere he was at the end of the story, his mind became a blank, and he had to be led home.

It was now discovered that what with his love of roving and of litigation, his circumstances were in a very poor condition. Upon which Arthur Murphy suggested that his two best comedies, "*Love à la Mode*," and "*The Man of the World*," should be published by subscription. The proposition was eagerly taken up, and £1582 were realised, with which an annuity of £200 was bought for himself, and another of £70 for his wife. He wrote the dedication to Lord Camden himself; it is long and lucid in expression, showing very little sign of failing brain power. He lived until 1797. He was then, according to the computation I have chosen to adopt, one hundred and eight years old; but even taking the latest date assigned for his birth,

he was close upon one hundred.* He was buried in St. Paul's Covent Garden.

I cannot close this article without one more characteristic anecdote of the man whose story I have been telling. He could never endure, no matter into what society he was thrown, to be considered inferior in knowledge and education to others. One evening he was invited to sup with some scientific men. As may be imagined, Macklin knew but little of such topics as they were likely to be strong in; but he was resolved to hold his own by getting up a subject for the occasion. He took the first book that came to hand—it was a *Treatise upon Gunpowder*. The question was, however, how to lead the conversation to such an out-of-the-way subject. But he was equal to the difficulty. Just as the talk was flagging, he suddenly jumped up exclaiming, “Was not that a gun fired?” Everybody answered that they had not heard anything. “Yes, there it is again,” he cried, “some accident has happened.” The waiters and landlord were summoned, and, it need scarcely be said, protested that no firearms had been discharged. “Very well,” said Macklin, after sending them away; “but although my hearing has deceived me, the properties of gunpowder are in many respects of a singular nature.”

And so went on to disgorge his cram.

* See Appendix C.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME FAMOUS TRAGEDIANS OF THE GARRICK PERIOD.

Spranger Barry—His Great “Points”—His Sensibility—His Great Success—His Splendid Style of Living—Failing Health—A Picture of him in his Latter Days—Mossop—A Picture of his Acting—His Hapless Fate—Anecdotes of his Pomposity and Impecuniosity—Reddish—A Wonderful Instance of the Association of Ideas—Ross—The Moral Influence of the Stage—Davies—John Henderson—His Falstaff—How Johnny Gilpin first became the Rage—Henderson’s Powers as an Actor—His Death and Burial.

GARRICK’S most famous rival in tragedy was Spranger Barry; but I have already given a sufficient account of their great artistic contests to render more than a brief notice of him superfluous. The excellences of the two actors were so distinct, that in reality there were no grounds for comparison. With a splendid *physique*, a handsome face, and a voice so melodious that he was called “silver-tongued;” Barry was the most irresistible of stage lovers, and in tenderness and majesty was as incomparable as Garrick was in the grand and conflicting passions of humanity.

The one was as great in the heroes of comedy as the other was in such characters as Abel Drugger and Sir John Brute. Davies says Cibber preferred Barry's Othello even to Betterton's and Booth's, and was seen loudly applauding it in the boxes—a most unusual thing for the old cynic to do. So terrible was Barry in the jealous scene, that his utterance of the line "I'll tear her all to pieces," would make the ladies shriek with terror; and Bernard says in his "Recollections" he could not sleep all night after witnessing this performance; while his "No, not much moved!" was equally fine in its heart-rending pathos. In the apology to the Senate he was so tender, so insinuating, that when the Duke said, "I think this tale would win my daughter too," there was a round of applause, as though the whole house echoed the sentiment. In "The Earl of Essex," when, upon being taken prisoner, he pointed to his Countess lying fainting upon the ground and exclaimed, "Oh, look there!" the critics in the pit burst into tears, and then shook the theatre with unbounded applause and huzzahs. He felt his parts so exquisitely that his powers of expression were frequently weakened in consequence, while Garrick, when producing his most terrible effects in "Lear," could in a pause thrust his tongue into his cheek and utter a jest. Such sensibility in

actors, however, although it may heighten the effect at times, rather embarrasses than assists them upon the whole, since it weakens the power of the judgment, and that perfect mastery over the workings of the passions, the first essentials of great acting. The most indifferent actresses will at times shed real tears in pathetic situations and fail to move an audience, while others, dry-eyed and unaffected, will by the mere perfection of art melt the very souls of the spectators.

Barry was born in Dublin in 1719, and brought up to the business of a silversmith. His first appearance upon the stage was at the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, as Othello in 1743. Like his great English rival, he met with immediate success. Such glowing accounts of his abilities were brought across the Channel—by Garrick for one, who pronounced him the most exquisite stage lover he had ever seen—that on Macklin's introduction, Lacy engaged him for Drury Lane, where he made his *début* on 4th of October, 1746, as Othello. London was enchanted, and crowds rushed to see the new actor in the Moor, Lord Townley, Macbeth, &c.

Well-connected, and a gentleman in private life, he was received in the best society and visited by the greatest people. He was called the Mark Antony of the stage, from his gay and splendid style of living. He gave entertainments to his

friends that would not have shamed a ducal host. He was on the most intimate terms with the Prime Minister, Pelham, who one night invited himself to sup with him. The actor had the bad taste to provide a banquet. Pelham severely reproved him, saying that *he* could not have done more to entertain a foreign ambassador. His fascination and powers of persuasion were as great off the stage as on—no one could resist them. Rich gave a very striking and significant picture of his character, when he said he could wheedle a bird off a tree and squeeze it to death in his hand. In 1758, he and Woodward built a new theatre in Dublin; the speculation turned out ruinously bad. When he returned to England he went to Foote at the Haymarket; but in 1766 Garrick offered him £1500 a year for himself and wife, which he accepted. While still in the prime of life he became a martyr to gout, and this ultimately broke up his constitution. When his health began to fail, Garrick generously added £200 to his salary, left him a free choice of parts, and allowed him at all times to consult his health and ease. At little more than fifty the once Apollo-like Spranger had become old and infirm. Frederick Reynolds, who, when a boy, saw him play Othello after he had lost his fine appearance, gives a very unflattering description of him, and a vivid little

picture of the stage of the period. "The noble, the victorious warrior, was personated by this great actor in a full suit of gold-laced scarlet, a small cocked hat, knee-breeches, and silk stockings, conspicuously displaying a pair of gouty legs. As to his wife, then in her zenith of youth and beauty, clad in the fascinating costume of Italy, she looked as captivating as he grotesque." Murphy wrote "The Grecian Daughter" to suit his failing physical powers. The play was poor stuff, but Barry made a grand performance of Evander. Yet when in one of the scenes he said, "I am now old," some brutes in the gallery jeered.

He died in 1776, at the early age of fifty-five. He lies among so many others of his great *confrères* in the cloisters at Westminster.

A rival both of Garrick and Barry, and one who believed himself superior to either, was THOMAS SHERIDAN, the father of Brinsley; he was of the old, frigid, declamatory school, good in Cato and such like parts, but by no means what he taught his son to believe him to have been—the greatest actor of the age. He was many years manager of one of the Dublin theatres, where he was a great favourite; but he made little impression in London. As an illustration of his egotism it is related that he always spoke the Queen Mab speech, which belongs to Mercutio, as Romeo.

A more famous actor, although his name is less familiar, was HENRY MOSSOP. The son of an Irish clergyman, he was himself intended for the Church; but the buskin had greater attractions for him, and in 1749 he appeared in Dublin as Zanga in "The Revenge." So highly was he spoken of that Garrick offered him an engagement for Drury Lane, where he appeared in the season of 1750-51 in the part above-named, which, and Richard, were his finest performances. But, although he had a good figure, a splendid eye, and great power in characters of strong passion, he was the most pedantic and stilted of actors. His favourite attitude was struck with one hand resting upon his hip, the other extended, from which he obtained the name of "the teapot."

One of Churchill's finest portraits in the "Rosciad" is that of this heavy tragedian.

" Mossop attach'd to military plan,
Still kept his eye fix'd on his right hand man ;
Whilst the mouth measures words with seeming skill,
The right hand labours, and the left lies still,
For he resolved on scripture grounds to go,
What the right doth the left hand shall not know.
With studied impropriety of speech
He soars beyond the hackney critic's reach ;
To epithets allots emphatic state,
Whilst principals, ungraced, like lacqueys, wait ;
In ways first trodden by himself excels,
And stands alone in indeclinables,

Conjunction, preposition, adverb, join
To stamp new vigour on the nervous line;
In monosyllables his thunders roll,
He, she, it, and, we, ye, they, frights the soul."

Disgusted at not being able to obtain the supreme position, he left Drury Lane in 1761, went back to Ireland, and opened the Smock Alley Theatre, in opposition to Barry and Woodward—a rivalry which terminated in ruin on both sides. Mossop, received in the best society of the Irish capital, plunged into gambling and reckless extravagance. From Garrick, whom he hated and abused for his superiority, he received considerable assistance; but nothing could avert his ruin. He returned to London almost penniless; but was too proud to solicit an engagement, which he considered he ought to be solicited to accept. At length, one day in 1773, having spent his last copper, he locked himself up in the miserable garret he rented at Chelsea, and refused to admit any one and all offers of food made him by a compassionate landlady. When at last the door was burst open, he was found lying upon his bed, dead of starvation. Garrick came forward to save his remains the disgrace of a pauper burial, but a relative of the unhappy man, who had taken no notice of him in his troubles, indignantly took the task upon himself.

Many amusing anecdotes are related of Mossop's pomposity and impecuniosity. One night in a

tragedy an actor who was supposed to be lying dead upon the stage began to cough, to the intense amusement of the audience. It was in one of Mossop's great scenes, and when the curtain fell he turned very wrathfully upon the culprit. "I could not help it, Sir: if I had not coughed I should have choked." "Sir," replied the grand tragedian with lofty disdain, "you should have choked a thousand times rather than have spoiled my scene!" The following story is one of many of the period of his Dublin management.

"The Distressed Mother" was to be acted—Orestes, Mr. Mossop; Andromache, Mrs. Burden. The salaries had not been paid for several weeks, and she was in the true character of a *distressed* woman. It was very difficult, on account of many inconvenient reasons, to gain admittance to him except on a Sunday, and on that grand levée day performers and tradesmen were too menial to be admitted. But with the desperation of a heroine, Mrs. Burden burst in upon him, prostrated herself at his feet, and cried in tragic tones, "Oh, Sir, for God's sake assist me; I have not bread to eat, I am actually starving, and shall be turned into the streets."

Mossop (in state).—"Wo-man!—you have five pounds per week, wo-man!"

Mrs. Burden.—"True, Sir, but I have been in Dublin six months, and in all that time I have

received only six pounds. I call every Saturday at the office for my salary, but no money is the answer. Besides, Sir, your credit and your honour are at stake; how can I play Andromache, the Trojan Queen, without black satin shoes?"

Mossop.—"Woman, begone! I insist on your having black satin shoes for Androm-a-che. And, wo-man, if you *dare* ask me for money again, I will forfeit you ten pounds, wo-man!"

He did not always succeed so well, however, in evading the demands of his unfortunate actors. In the last scene of "Lear" the old king dies in Kent's arms. One night the actor who played the earl, just as Mossop was in his dying agonies, whispered in his ear, "If you don't give me your word of honour you'll pay my arrears of salary to-night, I'll let you drop." "Don't talk to me now, villain," growled the tragedian. "Promise, or I'll let you drop, I will—I will;" and he began to suit the action to the word, until fear of the threatened *contretemps* compelled the manager to whisper the required pledge; which, to his credit be it said, he honourably kept.

Wilkinson had been giving at Drury Lane imitations of the Covent Garden actors, which called forth such remonstrances from them, that Garrick considered it his duty to administer a severe reprimand to the offender in the presence of the entire company, who very heartily joined in the snubbing.

“When the others had finished, Mr. Mossop, the turkey-cock of the stage, with slow and haughty steps, all erect, his gills all swelling, eyes disdainful, and hand upon his sword, breathing as if his respiration was honour, and, like the turkey, almost bursting with pride, began with much *hauteur*, ‘Mr. Wilkinson, phew! (as breathing grand) Sir—Mr. Wil—kin—son, Sir, I say—phew—how dare you, Sir, make free in a public theatre, or even in a private party, with your superiors? If you were to take such a liberty with me, *Sir*, I would draw my sword and run it through your bo-dy, *Sir*! You should not live, *Sir*!’ and with the greatest pomp and grandeur made his departure.”

This speech and the exit upset the gravity of every one, even of Garrick, and brought all scolding to an end with an uncontrollable fit of laughter.

This was not the last time that Wilkinson’s safety was threatened by this terrible tragedian. Some years afterwards, during Mossop’s management of the Dublin theatre, he made him a liberal offer to join his company, which Tate, being already engaged to Barry at the other house, was obliged to decline. Upon leaving Macklin’s residence, where the negotiations had taken place,—

“Mr. Mossop rose up suddenly and said: ‘Sir, I wish to attend you.’ On crossing the channels, which were very dirty, he offered me his hand very politely, then suddenly walked on for the space of

five or six minutes, when after a tragic ejaculation he stopped and said, 'Sir, Mr. Wil—kin—son! how do you dare to live, Sir?' 'Why, Sir, I do not think it strange my daring, but liking to live, having such plentiful tables where I am daily made welcome in Dublin with such a number of respectable friends.' 'Sir,' said Mossop, 'you are going to play in Crow Street Theatre with Barry, Sir; and, Sir, I will run you through the bo—dy, Sir, if you take the liberty to attempt my manner by any mimicry on the stage. You must promise me, Sir, on your honour you will not dare attempt it; if you break that promise, Sir, you cannot live; and you, Mr. Wil—kin—son, must die, as you must meet me next day, and I shall kill you, Sir.' "

Tate answered him very coolly, that if he insisted upon such a serious termination to the dispute, it would be his wish to have an affair of honour with him in preference to any other gentleman, on account of his theatrical consequence; as, if he were fortunate, it would deter many from being impudent, and if he fell in battle, it must be with *éclat*, as it would be by the hand of so celebrated a tragedian. This reply somewhat staggered the challenger, who had expected to inspire fear by his terrible threats: "At last he spoke the following words. 'You dare not take me off, Sir; or if you do, dare not take me off more than

a lit-tle; if you do more, Sir, you shall die!’ ”

REDDISH, an excellent actor in heavy parts, was the second husband of Canning's mother, who became an actress. His fate was a melancholy one. According to Taylor, while playing Hamlet one night at Covent Garden, the Laertes awkwardly knocked off his wig in the fencing scene, and exposed a bald head to the laughter of the audience. This so preyed upon his mind that he quitted the stage, and soon afterwards became insane. Upon his partial recovery a benefit was arranged for him, and he was to play Posthumus in “Cymbeline,” which had been one of his best parts. He entered the green-room at night with a wandering vacant look and tottering idiotic gait; some one congratulated him upon his reappearance. “Yes,” he answered, “I shall astonish you in the garden scene to-night.”

“But it is Posthumus, not Romeo you are going to play.” “No, Sir, I play Romeo.” He had to be pushed upon the stage and everybody expected a painful scene; but the moment he came in sight of the audience and heard the cue there was an electric change, his face lighted up and he acted as finely as ever he had done. When he returned to the green-room, the delusion again fell upon him that he was acting Romeo. Again he had to be thrust on, and again the sound of the cue and the sight of the footlights restored his reason, and never once, during the performance, did he flag

or falter. This is, perhaps, the most remarkable instance of all the many related of the extraordinary power of habit which in the actor becomes second nature. But the poor fellow ended his days in a lunatic asylum.

Ross was an actor who flourished between 1753 and 1788; he would be forgotten but for the story of how his acting in George Barnwell so deeply impressed a young scapegrace, who was following in the footsteps of the London apprentice, that he withdrew from his evil courses, became a wealthy man, and every year sent his unconscious reformer a present of ten guineas as a *souvenir*. Dr. Barrowby paid Ross the compliment of saying, that he had done more good by his acting than a parson by his preaching—a not uncommon occurrence. But he was careless and sleepy in his style, loved good eating and drinking better than his art, in which he never attained much eminence. He died in 1790, and is buried in St. James's, Piccadilly.

THOMAS DAVIES, whose "Miscellanies" and "Life of Garrick" have been so frequently quoted in these pages, was a bookseller as well as an author and actor—it was in his house Johnson and Boswell first met. He was for some time a member of Garrick's company, but never attained any eminence as an actor.

It was generally considered by contemporaries that, at his retirement, Garrick's mantle descended upon HENDERSON. He was the son of a respectable Cheapside tradesman, but was left fatherless at an early age; having some artistic talents, his mother thought of apprenticing him to a silversmith; but he joined a spouting club at Islington, won great applause for his recitations, frequented the theatres, sometimes met Garrick at a bookseller's shop, the owner of which was a friend of young John's, and of the Roscius as well, saw with wondering longings the court and deference paid to the great actor—and resolved to become one himself. One day Garrick heard him recite; was not greatly struck, but procured him an engagement at Bath. And on October 6th, 1772, the play bills of that city announced that Hamlet would be performed "by a Young Gentleman." On October 21st, he appeared as Richard III., under the name of Courtney. Before the end of the year he resumed his proper name, and soon established himself as a favourite actor in the leading parts of tragedy and comedy. In 1777, Colman engaged him for the Haymarket, where he made a great hit as Shylock, Hamlet, Falstaff, drawing into the little theatre in about a month between four and five thousand pounds. His Falstaff was said to have been an extraordinary performance, only to

be compared with Quin's, to which it was even superior in the scenes of riotous mirth. The next season, Sheridan engaged him for Drury Lane, where he was equally successful. During Lent one season, he gave readings with the elder Sheridan at the Freemason's Hall. He was a most exquisite reader, and would recite the pathetic stories from "Tristram Shandy" and the "Sentimental Journey," with a simple pathos that never failed to draw tears. Among his selections was Cowper's "Johnny Gilpin," which although it had been published three years was still little known, but he gave it with such *verve* and drollery that it at once became the rage. "He broke the people's hearts with the story of 'Le Fèvre,'" writes Tom Dibdin, "and then nearly killed them over again with laughing at 'Johnny Gilpin.'"

Boaden says, that his acting was analytic and artistic, but that he was careless in dressing, and his Lear always reminded the audience of his Falstaff. Ireland speaks highly of his Macbeth in the murder scene, "I think the countenance of horror and remorse he assumed was equal to anything I have ever seen;" but he found fault with the other portions. Kemble considered his Shylock was the greatest effort he had ever witnessed upon the stage, and the elder Macready preferred his Hamlet to John Philip's.

He was professedly of the Garrick school,

and imitated the great master so closely in Benedict, as to render the conception identical. In private life he was in every respect a gentleman, and was received as such in society. In figure he was short and ungraceful, with features not at all expressive; his voice too was neither powerful nor tender, Garrick called it "woolly." Extravagantly praised and harshly criticised by his contemporaries, it is difficult to form a just estimate of his powers; by many he was pronounced to be little, if at all inferior to Garrick; but this was only the prejudice of friendship and a clique. Henderson was an admirable imitator, a man of undoubted talent, but when compared with Garrick he was only what the moon is to the sun. Taylor pronounces him to have been the best general actor of his time; but adds, that his style was heavy and that he lacked care and vivacity. Yet had not his career been prematurely closed, in 1785, Kemble might have had a harder battle to fight for supremacy. He was only thirty-eight when he died, of an opiate, it is said, administered in mistake for another medicine, and so highly was he esteemed, that burial was granted his remains in Westminster Abbey, where he lies close to Garrick.

CHAPTER V.

SOME FAMOUS COMEDIANS OF THE GARRICK PERIOD.

Harry Woodward—His Acting as Petruchio—Ned Shuter—His Singular Character—Anecdote of Whitfield—Making Royal Visitors Useful—Weston—The Life of a Wandering Thespian—The Original Jerry Sneak—His great Comic Powers—Lichtenberg's Picture of his Acting as Scrub—Quick, George the Third's Favourite Comedian—The Handsome O'Brien—His Elopement with an Earl's Daughter.

ONE of the finest comedians of the last century was HARRY WOODWARD, the inimitable Mercutio, Bobadil, Touchstone, Marplot, Captain Absolute, Mimic and speaking Harlequin, who made his first appearance as Rich's pupil at Covent Garden in 1730, when quite a boy. He was born in 1717. His father was a tallow-chandler, and Harry was educated at Merchant Taylor's. Leaving Rich he went over to Drury Lane in 1738, where he became a supreme favourite. Davies tells us that his face was of a serious cast; but the moment he opened his mouth upon the stage, a certain ludi-

crous air laid hold of his features, and every muscle ranged itself on the side of levity. The very tone of his voice inspired comic ideas. Although Clive was admirable as Katherine in "Taming the Shrew," she seemed to be overborne by the extravagant and triumphant grotesqueness of Woodward's Petruchio, and to be as much overawed by his manner of acting as the lady is supposed to be in the play. So naturally graceful was he, that it was said he could not throw himself into an ungraceful attitude. He made his last appearance at Covent Garden in 1777, and died in the same year.

Garrick pronounced NED SHUTER to be the greatest comic genius he had ever known. He was the original Old Hardcastle and Sir Anthony Absolute, Papillon in "The Liar," and Justice Woodcock in "Love in a Village." Strange to say he was a follower of Whitfield's, a constant attendant at the Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and divided his time pretty equally between drinking, playing, and praying; when drunk he could scarcely be restrained from going into the fields and preaching upon original sin and regeneration. Tate Wilkinson, who was a hanger-on upon Shuter, relates how he used to accompany him on Sunday mornings at six to the Tottenham Court Road Chapel; at ten to another Meeting House in Long Acre; at eleven back to Whitfield's Chapel; at three to

some other; and in the evening to Moorfields. He was very liberal to the Whitfieldites, and it is said that Whitfield himself, although a bitter denouncer of all persons and things dramatic, on the occasion of Shuter's benefit recommended the congregation to attend the theatre for *once, on that night only*.

His first appearance was at Covent Garden in 1745, as "The Schoolboy," for the benefit of an actor named Chapman, and was so young that he was announced in the bills as "Master Shuter," as he was in those of Drury Lane a twelvemonth afterwards. He died November 1st., 1776. His last performance was Falstaff, for his own benefit in the preceding May; but between the bottle and the tabernacle his faculties were nearly gone. "He was more bewildered in his brain," says Wilkinson, "by wishing to acquire imaginary grace than by all his drinking; like Maw-Worm he believed he had a call." In his reasonable moments he was a lively, shrewd companion, full of originality, whim, and humour; all he said and did was his own, for it was with difficulty he could read his parts, and he could just sign his name and no more; but he was the delight of all who knew him on or off the stage. John Taylor relates how he and his father dined and passed an evening with him at the "Blue Posts" Tavern in Russell Street, and how all the

people in the neighbouring boxes could do nothing but listen to his comical stories and *bon-mots*. Another time they were at some gardens, when the people gathered together in such crowds to hear his humourous sallies, that the waiters could not move about to serve. "No person thought of retiring while Shuter remained, and I remember seeing him in the midst of his friends, as if he were the monarch of merriment." He was equally a favourite with the most distinguished people in the realm. It is related that one night two of the royal princes came behind the scenes to have a chat with him. Their presence was anything but welcome on that occasion, as Shuter desired to study his part. "By Jove," he said suddenly, "the prompter has got my book, I must fetch it. Will your royal Highness," addressing one of his visitors, "be so obliging as to hold my skullcap to the fire?" "Oh, certainly, Shuter," replied the Prince. "And perhaps you, your royal Highness," turning to the other, "will condescend to air my breeches while I am gone?" The second request was as cheerfully complied with as the first. Returning presently with another actor, and peeping through the keyhole, he saw his two visitors still engaged as he had left them, patiently awaiting his return.

Perhaps, however, notwithstanding Garrick's

opinion, a more original genius of this period was WESTON. His father was head cook to George II., and he, as a youth, had been a clerk in the royal kitchen. But he fell into wild courses, entered the Navy as a midshipman, contrived to procure his discharge, joined a strolling company, believed he had a call to tragedy, and acted Richard III. execrably. But the next night he was induced to play Scrub in "The Beaux Stratagem," and in that put every one into ecstasies. He earned but little money, and spent that little unwisely; laughable stories are told of the straits to which he was at times reduced; how he had to lie in bed while his only shirt was washed; but he had *the sleeve* of a defunct one, which he put on, and thrust that arm from under the coverlet when his landlady entered the room. At one time he was playing in Shuter and Yates's booth at Bartholomew Fair, nine times a day for a guinea; then Foote engaged him for the Haymarket (1759), but only to fill an inferior position; until gauging his talents, he wrote Jerry Sneak for him. The next season he was at Drury Lane, and thenceforth alternated between the two houses, and was second to no comic actor of the age. But unhappily his old habits of dissipation ruined all his prospects. So hunted was he by bailiffs, that at times he could enter the Haymarket only over the roofs of the adjoining houses, and ultimately had to take up his abode entirely

in that building, where he lived in a state of siege. He died in 1776, the victim of habitual intemperance.

A contemporary bestows upon him the high eulogy, that he seldom outstripped the modesty of Nature, and that he absolutely forgot his own identity in every part he personated. In Abel Druggier he was considered superior even to Garrick, and so delighted was the great manager with his performance of that character, that he presented him with a twenty-pound note. He was a great favourite of Lichtenberg's, whose pictures of his acting are as graphic as anything in Cibber.

“When he appears, one's first idea is that some passer-by has lost his way and wandered on to the stage : his dress is so natural and his whole air so unconscious. This of itself shows no common mind. You see by what I have said that Weston is spoiled for a chameleon. In him the fox is all in all : Nature, which, on the one hand, appears to have destined him to excite laughter, seems on the other to have denied him the capacity of laughing himself. He is habitually grave, never goes beyond a smile, and that rarely ; and it takes a long time before a smile spreads over his whole face. I have seen it do so once, when a pretty chambermaid, wanting to gain him for her mistress's plans, pats his cheek. His face lighted up slowly, but at last to such an extent as to display at least a couple of dozen teeth, most of them no trifles. Not a

mouth in the house but relaxed into a laugh or smile, after its special fashion."

The critic then goes on to give a description of Garrick and Weston's acting in *Archer* and *Scrub*. The former disguised as a fashionable footman, the latter the servant of all work of a country-house, who on Monday drives the coach, on Tuesday drives the plough, on Wednesday follows the hounds, on Thursday duns the tenants, on Friday goes to market, on Saturday draws the warrants, and on Sunday draws the beer. Mingled astonishment and admiration overcome him at the sight of the grand gentleman's gentleman. "With fallen chin in a kind of adoration, he follows every movement of Garrick with his eyes. *Archer*, who wants *Scrub* to aid him in his schemes, soon grows condescending. They sit down together. With the easy grace peculiar to him, Garrick throws himself into a chair, rests his right arm upon the back of Weston's seat, and leans forward for a little confidential chat. The skirts of his splendid livery hang down gracefully, and in the folds of the coat and the person of the man, one line of beauty succeeds another. Weston sits on the middle of his chair, as befits him, but somewhat far forward, a hand on either knee. He seems dumb-founded, and his cunning eyes are fixed on Garrick. If anything is expressed on his face, it is the affectation of dignity struggling with the paralysing sense of

the horrible contrast between him and his companion. I here remarked a bit of business by Weston which produced a capital effect. Whilst Garrick lolls easily in his chair, Weston, with stiffened back, tries by degrees to out-top him, partly from feelings of respect, but partly, too, that he may now and then steal a comparison when Garrick is not looking him in the face. When Archer, at length, in his easy way, crosses his legs, Scrub attempts to do the same, and, at last, but not without some assistance from the hands, he happily accomplishes this feat. All this is done with eyes either fixed or looking stealthy comparison. At last, when Archer begins to stroke his splendid silk stockinged legs, Weston almost instinctively imitates the action over his miserable red worsted stockings, but immediately after collapses in his chair, and with a feeling of humility that calls forth one's pity, quietly gathers his green apron over all. In this scene, Weston, with his natural expression of stupidity, his simple, restless looks, (which gain not a little from the unaffected husky tone of his voice,) almost has the advantage of Garrick, and that is saying a great deal."

QUICK, who made his first appearance in London at the Haymarket in 1767, as one of the pupils in Foote's "Orators," was the favourite actor of George III. The King was so delighted with his

conversation that he would frequently send for him to Buckingham Palace. He realized a comfortable fortune, and resigned his engagement at Drury Lane in 1799, because he was called upon to act more than three times a week. He returned to the stage, however, in 1801, to play Isaac in the revival of Sheridan's "Duenna," and again in 1809 for the same part at the Lyceum. His last appearance was in 1813, as Don Pedro in "The Wonder;" but he did not die until 1831, being then eighty-three years old. He once played Richard III. for his benefit. Taylor says, "He supported the part with good sense and judgment throughout, but the peculiarity of his voice occasionally broke forth with such comic effect, that the audience, with all their respect for his talents and character, could not help giving way to ludicrous emotions."

"In all Shakespeare's clowns," says Boaden, "he freely executed the conceptions of his great author, and said no more than was set down for him. His Dogberry may be said to have been as perfect a personation as any representation even by Garrick himself." He was a famous Tony Lumpkin and Justice Woodcock ("Love in a Village,") and particularly excellent in misers.

WILLIAM O'BRIEN was a handsome, dashing actor of comedy gentlemen, who, in 1764, married Lady Susan Strangeways, a daughter of the Earl of

Ilchester. It was a runaway match, of course, and celebrated at St. Paul's, Covent Garden; as the happy couple quitted the church by one door, the angry father entered by the other, but too late to stop the ceremony. O'Brien, however, although only the son of a Dublin dancing-master, was of a good old Irish family, and my lord, wisely making the best of a bad job, took him off the stage and procured him an appointment in the West Indies. He afterwards obtained for him the post of Receiver-General of Dorsetshire, which office the "*Biographia Dramatica*" informs us he still held, although at a very advanced age, in 1812.

Several excellent actors of this period remain unnamed, but as there is nothing interesting to be told about them, we will pass on to a famous group.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ORIGINAL ACTORS OF THE "SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."

Smith, the Charles Surface—Tom King, the Sir Peter Teazle—
"Plausible Jack Palmer," the Joseph Surface—Anecdotes of
his Impudent Mendacity—His Strange Death—Yates, the Sir
Oliver—Died of Stewed Eels—Baddeley, the Moses—His
Bequests—Parsons, the Crabtree—A Romantic Marriage—
Dodd, the Sir Benjamin Backbite—Farren—Lamash—Packer,
the Careless—Trip—Snake.

"SMITH, the genteel, the airy, and the smart,"
as Churchill styles him, was a famous light
comedian and an indifferent tragedian; he would
be little remembered now had he not been the
original Charles Surface, for Sheridan's brilliant
comedy seems to have given a species of immor-
tality to all its original representatives. Although
only the son of a wholesale grocer in the city, he
was sent to Eton and afterwards to Cambridge.
But he quitted College rather hastily, to avoid ex-
pulsion on account of an insult he offered to one
of the proctors, came up to London, turned his

thoughts to the stage, took lessons of Spranger Barry, and made his first appearance at Covent Garden Theatre on January 1st, 1753, as Theodosius, in Lee's tragedy of that name. And at Covent Garden he remained—only twice accepting a provincial engagement, at Bristol and Dublin—until 1774, when he went to Drury Lane. There he had the honour of occasionally alternating Richard and Hamlet with Garrick. "My utmost ambition, as an actor, was to be thought worthy to hold up his train. I can never speak of him but with idolatry," he used to say, when referring to that time. He was Mrs. Siddon's first Macbeth, in London. Boaden says, he had but one manner for tragedy, whether he was playing Richard or Hamlet. But his *verve* and gentlemanly bearing carried him through a world of emotion without exciting a tear, and you were some way satisfied, though not much moved. He seems to have belonged rather to the pre-Garrick school than to have imitated the great master. In comedy he was altogether admirable, a fine figure, a handsome face, the air of a gentleman, full of dash, life, gallantry, and manliness. He used to boast that during all the years he was upon the stage, he never blackened his face, never played in a farce, and never ascended through a trap door. His first wife, whom he married soon after taking to the stage, was a daughter of Lord Hinchbrook; she died in 1762, and he then married a

widow of large fortune. He took leave of his profession as Charles Surface, in 1788, being then fifty-eight years of age, and retired to Bury St. Edmunds, there to enjoy his favourite pursuits of fox hunting and racing. In 1798, he re-appeared as Charles, for King's benefit, and although ten years had elapsed since he had last appeared before the public, Taylor says, he was greeted with the most unbounded applause. Never perhaps on any occasion did an individual in any station receive more hearty demonstrations of public esteem and approbation. In the last act of the play *Lady Teazle* happening to drop her fan, there was a race among the actors to pick it up, but Smith, although then nearly seventy years of age, got the start of them all, and delivered it to her with an elegance that brought down a hearty round of applause. He died at Bury St. Edmunds, in 1813, in his eighty-third year.

Among the stars of the second magnitude there was no more famous player in Garrick's company than TOM KING. In 1747, he being then only seventeen, he was strolling with Ned Shuter among the Kentish barns. When he joined Yates's booth at Windsor, Garrick heard of him as a very promising young man, and, always on the look out for fresh talent, he sent for him, tested his capabilities at a private rehearsal, and engaged him for two seasons at Drury Lane. King made his first appear-

ance in October, 1748. Being a novice, he had to play every kind of part, tragic or comic, as suited the convenience of the manager. For a wonder, he understood the bent of his genius, hated tragedy, and desired to confine himself entirely to comedy. Finding he could not obtain this in London, he accepted an engagement with Sheridan at Dublin. There he remained nine years, immensely popular both as an actor and a man. When he returned to London, in 1759, it was as a finished artist. He was equally admirable in old men and low comedy. His performance of Malvolio and Touchstone was said to have been unequalled. But it was as Lord Ogleby, in "The Clandestine Marriage," he attained his highest fame. The character was intended for Garrick, but whether from an indisposition to study, or because he could not see himself in it, he handed the part over to King. King declined it, and it was only after much persuasion he was induced to change his mind. Tate Wilkinson pronounces it to have been "one of the most capital and highly finished performances to which any audience was ever treated."

When Sheridan became lessee of Drury Lane, he made King his stage manager. But it was with only the shadow of power he was invested, and confessed he had not the authority to order the cleaning of a coat, or the addition of a yard of copper lace. Yet he held this doubtful position for several years, and

until Kemble succeeded to it. He was the original Sir Peter Teazle, and although Sheridan was not satisfied with his conception, nor indeed with that of either Wroughton or Mathews, who succeeded him in the part, all contemporaries speak of it as a great performance.

Not until 1802 did he take leave of the stage, and the "School for Scandal" was the play he chose for the occasion. His brother actors presented him with a silver cup, upon which their names were inscribed, and this motto from "Henry the Fifth:"—"If he be not fellow with the best king, thou shalt find him the best king of good fellows." A parting address was written for him by Cumberland, and when he withdrew for ever from the scene of his triumphs it was "amidst the tears and plaudits of a splendid and crowded house." He died two years afterwards, at the age of seventy-four, and lies in St. Paul's, Covent Garden.

"His acting," says Hazlitt, "left a taste on the palate sharp and sweet like a quince. With an old, hard, rough, withered face, like a sour apple, puckered up into a thousand wrinkles; with shrewd hints and tart replies; with nods and becks and wreathed smiles; he was the real amorous, wheedling, or hasty, choleric, peremptory old gentleman in Sir Peter Teazle and Sir Anthony Absolute, and the true, that is, pretended clown in Touchstone,

with Wit sprouting from his head like a pair of ass's ears, and Folly perched on his cap like the horned owl." He was "a fellow of infinite jest." At Dublin, on tragedy nights, Sheridan forbade him the green-room; but at some time of the evening he would be sure to peep in at the door, dash in a joke, set everybody in a roar, and rush off before the solemn manager could hurl at him the vials of his wrath. He might have died the possessor of an ample fortune had it not been for his unconquerable passion for gambling, by which he is said to have lost £7,000. He had his town-house in Great Queen Street, his villa at Hampton, and kept his carriage. He was at one time part proprietor both of the Bristol and Sadler's Wells Theatres; but, falling into the toils of an aristocratic blackleg, he was reduced to comparative poverty, and died in lodgings in Store Street, Tottenham Court Road, leaving his widow almost dependant upon the charity of friends. With the exception of that one fatal blot, his character stood high in the love and respect of all who knew him, as the cheerfulest and wittiest of companions, and as an upright and honourable man.

JOHN PALMER, "Plausible Jack," as Sheridan called him, was as famous for his audacity and mendacity as he was for his acting. His father was a theatrical bill-sticker, and in his younger days John carried the paste-can. One night he was flashing his diamonds in Drury Lane green-room.

“Are they real?” inquired one of the actors. “I never wear anything else,” answered Jack sharply. “Indeed! Well, I remember the time you had nothing but *paste*,” retorted the other. “Why don’t you stick him against the wall, Jack?” cried out Bannister, who was present. Jack became stage-struck in his youth, and prevailed upon Garrick to hear him give portions of George Barnwell and Mercutio; but the great manager was not struck by the performance. He was more fortunate with Foote, who cast him Harry Scamper in “The Orators.” In 1766, when he was only nineteen, Garrick changed his opinion of his abilities, and gave him a four years’ engagement. Two years afterwards Robert Palmer, his namesake—the Palmer of the “Rosciad”—died, and John succeeded to many of his parts. He became an admirable actor. He was especially fine in the more insinuating villains of tragedy; his Stukely was as great a performance in its way as Mrs. Siddons’ Mrs. Beverley; as his villainy was gradually unfolded the audience hissed and howled at him; the more excitable people would rise in their seats and shake their fists. “His villany in Villeroy,” says Boaden, “had a delicate and hopeless ardour of affection that made it an impossibility for Isabella to resist him. He seemed a being expressly favoured by fate to wind about that lovely victim the web of inextricable misery.” In Joseph Surface he has probably never had a suc-

cessor; he was the man himself. Lamb, who has discoursed most pleasantly upon his acting in this part, says that when he played it, Joseph Surface was the hero of the play. After Henderson he was the best Falstaff, and an inimitable Sir Toby Belch; as My Lord Duke in "High Life Below Stairs," he was exquisitely diverting. No part came amiss to him; he could play Jacques, or Touchstone, or Hamlet, or Macbeth, Gratiano, or Shylock. In the leading characters of tragedy, however, he did not rise above mediocrity. In such parts as Captain Absolute, Young Wilding, Dick Amlet, characters of cool impudence, he was inimitable. Geneste enumerates three hundred parts performed by him, and gives those only as a selection.

He built the Royalty Theatre in Wellclose Square, which he opened in June, 1787, with a strong company. On that night Braham, then only fourteen years of age, made his first appearance upon the stage as Master Abraham, and sang between the pieces. The patentees of Drury Lane and Covent Garden commenced proceedings against Palmer, and the magistrates summoned him to appear before them at a tavern in the neighbourhood to show under what licence he was acting. Jack bowed and scraped to them with the most excessive humility; he had the document at home, he said, would they so far indulge him as to wait while he went and fetched it—he lived close by, he

would not be two minutes. Permission was granted, and with his hand upon his heart, and invoking Heaven to bless them, he took his departure. After waiting some time for his return, the gentlemen rang the bell for the waiter, who upon trying to open the door, found it locked, the key gone, and the magistrates prisoners. Jack had no licence, and, fearing they would commit him to prison, had turned the key upon the quorum and put it into his pocket. He was not seen again until the storm had blown over. When he returned to Drury Lane, he met Sheridan with an air of the most penitent humility, his head lowered, the whites of his eyes turned up, one hand upon his heart, the other holding a white pocket-handkerchief—a complete picture of Joseph Surface. "My dear Mr. Sheridan," he began, "if you could but know at this moment what I feel *here*." "Why, Jack, you forget I *wrote it*," interrupted Sheridan. And Jack was not only reinstated in his former position, but his salary was raised three pounds a week. Sometimes a letter would arrive at six o'clock to say he was too ill to act. One night Sheridan, suspecting a trick, went off to his house. A friend of Jack's contrived to get there before him, and give him warning of the visit. He found the hypocrite convivially dining; but by the time the manager arrived his face was swathed in flannel, while the most agonizing groans issued from

his lips. He assured him, with tears, that his mental sufferings were far worse from the knowledge that they were injuring the establishment. Sheridan, completely deceived by the consummate actor, went away quite grieved at having suspected him. A favourite excuse for breaking his appointments was his wife's accouchement. Michael Kelly once congratulated him on having a wife who made him a happy father at least once in two months. He confessed to having once persuaded a bailiff, who had arrested him for debt, to become his bail. As might be expected from such a man, he was reckless and extravagant, and his affairs were always in sad confusion. There were always writs out against him, and he had frequently to be conveyed to the theatre in boxes and other stage properties.

“His noble figure and graceful manners,” says Boaden, “threw him into a variety of temptation difficult to be resisted, and sworn foes to professional diligence and severe study.” His end was remarkable. He was playing the “Stranger” at Liverpool in August, 1798; he had been much depressed in mind of late through the death of his wife, and in the scene with Baron Steinfort, while speaking of his children, as he came to the line, “I left them at a town hard by,” he stopped suddenly, then endeavoured to proceed, but in the effort fell upon his back, heaved a convulsive sigh, and expired immediately.

YATES, the original Sir Oliver Surface, was almost as famous for longevity as Macklin. We find him an established actor in Giffard's company when Garrick made his first appearance; yet he did not die until 1796, being then in his ninety-seventh year; and he might have lived much longer but for his irascible temper. His favourite dish was stewed eels; one morning his housekeeper failed to procure any; Yates fell into a furious rage and drove her out to scour the markets. When she returned with the fish, she found him with his head upon the table quite dead. Davies calls him one of the first comedians of the age; he was a famous speaking harlequin and Shakespearian clown, and great in characters of low humour, but so conscientious an artiste, that he was seldom known to resort to trickery for applause. His style was dry and grave, and seems to have been founded upon that of Dogget.

BADDELEY, who made his first appearance at Drury Lane, in 1780, had been in his younger days a cook in Foote's service, where he imbibed a taste for the drama. When he was playing at the Haymarket, considering himself to be insulted by his former master, he challenged him to fight with swords. "Hey, what!" exclaimed Foote, "fight! Oh, the dog! So I have taken the spit from my kitchen fire and stuck it by his side, and now the fellow wants to stick me with it!" A wit remarked

that in acting he always seemed to be *tasting* his words. He was particularly excellent in Germans, Swiss and Frenchmen, and all foreigners; but he had made the Jewish character an especial study; he was the original Moses, and it was while dressing for that part in 1794 he was taken ill, and soon afterwards expired. He had a cottage at Moulsey, which he bequeathed to the Drury Lane Fund as a home for four poor actors; he also left money to build them a smoking summer-house out of wood from old Drury Lane Theatre. But after a time the cottage was sold and the proceeds put into the Fund. Another bequest of his, however, has been better observed; he left £100 in the Three per Cents to purchase a cake and wine, to be partaken of by the company in Drury Lane green-room annually and for ever, in celebration of his memory. He was the last actor who wore the royal livery of scarlet and gold.

In every respect, in figure, gait, and face, PARSONS was essentially marked out for old men's characters, and whether he exhibited avarice, fondness, insensibility, weakness, he never for a moment forgot the part he was acting. "Every passion circulated in him to the extremities, and spoke in the motion of his feet and hands." His Crabtree, of which he was the original, was inimitable; so was his Sir Fretful Plagiary, another original part, in "The Critic." Boaden describes him attempting to enjoy Sneer's

criticisms with tears in his eyes, then suddenly checking an unnatural laugh, to stare aghast at his tormentors. He was born in 1736, and educated at St. Paul's School. His father was a builder, and it was intended he should succeed to the business, but the footlights had more attraction for him. He made his first appearance at Drury Lane in 1762. There is a little romance connected with his life. His second wife was the daughter of the Honourable James Stewart, the brother of the Earl of Galloway. Escaping from a convent abroad, in which she had been placed against her will, she came over to London quite destitute of friends; she met Parsons by accident; interested by her forlorn position, he made her acquaintance and married her. He retired in 1795, and went to live in the neighbourhood of Blackheath; he is buried in the churchyard of that parish.

Boaden describes DODD as "the prince of pink heels and the soul of empty eminence. As he tottered rather than walked down the stage, in all the protuberance of endless muslin and lace in his cravats and frills, he reminded you of the jutting motion of the pigeon. He took his snuff, or his bergamot, with a delight so beyond all grosser enjoyments that he left you no doubt whatever of the superior happiness of a coxcomb." He was the last of the fops whose reign began with Cibber. How exquisitely Charles Lamb describes his acting in

Sir Andrew Aguecheek. "In expressing slowness of apprehension this actor surpassed all others. You could see the first dawn of an idea stealing slowly over his countenance, climbing up by little and little, with a painful process, till it cleared up at last to the fullness of a twilight conception—its highest meridian. He seemed to keep back his intellect as some have had the power to retard their pulsation. The balloon takes less time in filling, than it took to cover the expansion of his broad moony face over all its quarters with expression. A glimmer of understanding would appear in the corner of his eye, and for lack of fuel go out again. A part of his forehead would catch a little intelligence, and be a long time in communicating it to the remainder." He was the original Sir Benjamin Backbite. He made his first appearance at Drury Lane, after a hard novitiate in the provinces, in 1765. He retired in 1796. He was a man of cultivated taste, and left behind him a very valuable library, which was sold by auction after his death; the King, the Duke of Roxburgh, and John Kemble bought the principal part of it.

The name of FARREN stands against Careless in the original cast of Sheridan's comedy. This was the father of the future great Sir Peter. AICKIN, a useful actor, was the Rowley; LAMASH and PACKER, upon whom we need not pause, the Trip and Snake.

The ladies will appear in a future chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

SAMUEL FOOTE.

His Birth and Family—At the Bedford—First Literary Production—History of the Haymarket Theatre—Foote's First Appearance upon the Stage—"Diversions of the Morning"—"A Dish of Tea"—A Cat Concert—"Iterum, Iterum, Iterumque"—He sets up as a Fortune Teller—His Satire upon the Whitfieldites—"One Legged George Faulkner"—Loses a Limb—The Tailors' Riot—"The Christian Club"—A Good Story—The Duchess of Kingston—Nemesis—His Death—His Character—His Mobs—Johnson's Opinion of him—His Comedies.

FOOTE, perhaps, belongs rather to the dramatic authors than to the actors, but no theatrical history would be complete without an account of that famous mimic and humourist, who was certainly one of the most conspicuous characters of the age in which he lived.

His father was a Cornish gentleman, and an M.P.; his mother was the daughter of Sir Edmund Goodere, and claimed cousinship with the Rutlands. Samuel was born at Truro, in the year 1720. When quite a boy, his powers of mimicry were the delight of his parents' friends; while at school he equally

delighted his schoolfellows by imitating the peculiarities of every visitor to his father's house. He received his education at the Worcester Grammar School, and thence removed to Worcester College, Oxford, which he quitted with no inconsiderable classical attainments. He afterwards entered the Temple as a student for the Bar, but loved better to frequent the coffee-houses and taverns of Fleet Street and the Strand than to pore over musty volumes. No young fellow spent his money more freely, nor beau dressed more gaily than he. The Bedford Coffee House, was his favourite haunt. A contemporary thus sketches his first appearance there :

“He came into the room, dressed out in a frock-suit of green and silver lace, bag-wig, sword, bouquet, and point ruffles, and immediately joined the critical circle at the upper end of the room. Nobody knew him. He, however, soon boldly entered into conversation, and by the brilliancy of his wit, the justness of his remarks, and the unembarrassed freedom of his manners, attracted the general notice. The buzz of the room went round, ‘Who is he?’ which nobody could answer ; until a handsome carriage stopping at the door to take him to the assembly of a lady of fashion, they learned from the servants that his name was Foote, that he was a young gentleman of family and fortune, and a student of the Inner Temple.”

The fortune, however, was soon run through, and the young gentleman reduced to great straits. Making but little progress in his profession, he was under the necessity of trying other means of making money. His first effort was literary, and somewhat curious. His mother had two brothers, Sir John and Captain Goodere. The baronet had been recently strangled by the Captain on board his own ship, and the murderer since hanged in chains. It was a pamphlet, describing the particulars of the crime, the trial and execution, which was the first offspring of Foote's pen. His biographers have been at a loss to understand the meaning of this strange production, but to me there is something highly characteristic of the man's cynical nature in the choice of such a subject. There was a kind of ghastly humour in thus making the crimes and disgrace of his family minister to his necessities. And very pressing were those necessities at the time; the once exquisite *petit-maitre* was actually reduced to wear boots without stockings. One of the first investments he made out of the ten pounds paid him by the Old Bailey publisher for his effusion, was in the purchase of two pairs of those necessary articles. While returning home, he fell in with two old college friends, with whom he dined at a Fleet Street tavern; as they were drinking their wine, one of them remarked the deficiency in his attire. "I never wear any at this time of year" (it was

summer), replied Foote, perfectly unabashed, "until I dress for the evening; and you see," producing the two pairs he had bought, "I am well provided."

His next venture was in another profession.

Having frequently met Foote at the Bedford, and perceiving him to be a young man of wit and education, Macklin, who had then just opened his school of instruction, persuaded him to try his fortune upon the stage.

In 1720, a carpenter, named John Potter, built a small theatre in the Haymarket upon the site of the King's Head Inn. The cost of the building, with scenery and dresses, was about £1,500. It was opened in 1721 by Aaron Hill with a play of his own, on the subject of Henry V.; it was soon afterwards let to a Company of French Comedians, who were its first occupants, and for several years it was called "The New French Theatre." But gradually it came to be known as "the Little Theatre in the Haymarket." Henry Fielding opened it in 1734 with that terrible social and political satire, "Pasquin," the effects of which have already been alluded to. It was here Theophilus Cibber brought the deserters from Higmores Company; and it was here that Macklin held his training school, and that Samuel Foote made his first appearance upon any stage as Othello to his tutor's Iago. This certainly must have been a ludicrous performance; Macklin used to say, "the audience could scarce

refrain from laughing, although Foote perfectly knew what the author meant." His next efforts, Lord Foppington, Cibber's great part, and Pierre in "Venice Preserved," were scarcely more fortunate. His appearance, alone, would have rendered him totally unsuitable for such characters : his stature was short and inclined to stoutness ; his face was round, full, and flat ; his nose broad and coarse ; these faults however were partly redeemed by a pleasant mouth, and sparkling eyes full of humour.

After these fruitless efforts, he turned his attention to a more suitable line of character, although he occasionally essayed genteel comedy ; and even as late as 1758 appeared for his benefit, at Drury Lane, as Shylock, with Kitty Clive for Portia ; and neither of them intended it for burlesque ! But, with that strange desire to be something we are not, and anything rather than what we are, which is a prominent feature of human discontent, nearly all our great comedians have started as aspirants to tragic honours. Foote, however, must have possessed some merits, although Davies pronounces him to have been despicable in all parts save those of his own writing, as we find him engaged, the winter after his Haymarket *début*, at Drury Lane, and playing such characters as Harry Wildair, in Farquhar's "Constant Couple,"—with Peg Woffington, *the* Sir Harry, in the piece—and Bayes, in "The Rehearsal." As we have before seen it was customary to imitate

the styles of the best-known actors in this part, but Foote carried the license still further; for not only did he mimic the peculiarities of actors, but those of statesmen, doctors, lawyers, or any persons whom the public would recognise or laugh at. It was the success of this performance that induced him, in 1747, to open the Haymarket Theatre with a piece of his own writing, entitled, "The Diversions of the Morning." The house was crammed. The "Diversions" consisted of the old imitations of Bayes, and some new ones. The Epilogue was a satirical mimicry of the frequenters of the Bedford. But a selection from Congreve's "Old Bachelor" got him into hot water. The theatre was not licensed, and the actors of the patent houses called upon the Westminster magistrates to interfere; so on the second night the constables entered and dispersed the audience.

But Foote was not to be so easily put down: on the very next morning he issued another announcement in the *General Advertiser*:—

"On Saturday afternoon, exactly at twelve o'clock, at the new theatre in the Haymarket, Mr. Foote begs the favour of his friends to come and drink a dish of chocolate with him; and 'tis hoped there will be a great deal of comedy and some joyous spirits; he will endeavour to make the Morning as Diverting as possible. Tickets to be had for this entertainment at George's Coffee Houses, Temple

Bar, without which no one will be admitted. N.B.—Sir Dilbury Diddle will be there, and Lady Betty Frisk has absolutely promised."

A crowded house was the result of this advertisement; curiosity was on tiptoe to know what it meant. Foote came forward, and, bowing to the audience, informed them that "as he was training some young performers for the stage, he would, with their permission, whilst chocolate was getting ready, proceed with his instructions before them." Under pretence of teaching these pupils, he again introduced his imitations. The authorities made no further attempt to interfere with him; and in a few weeks he altered the time of his entertainment from morning to evening, and the title from "Chocolate" to "Tea." To drink a dish of tea with Mr. Foote became the rage of the season. The actors exclaimed that his mimicry would ruin them. Upon which the wit replied that in that case it would be his duty to provide another situation for each lady and gentleman who, instead of murdering blank verse, and assuming the characters of kings, queens, lords, and ladies, for which their abilities were far from being suitable, should be placed where their talents and behaviour could with more propriety be employed. Quin he appointed, on account of his deep voice and ponderous manner, to be a watchman; Delane, who had a whining delivery, was to be a beggar; Ryan, who was noted

for a shrill voice and monotonous tone, an itinerant razor-grinder; Peg Woffington, an orange girl, &c. Finding that every move they made against him only ended in defeat and further ridicule, the actors at length, in sheer despair, let him take his course unmolested. The year afterwards he appeared in a similar entertainment, which he called "An Auction of Pictures." New characters were introduced,—notably Sir Thomas de Veil, a Westminster justice; Mr. Cock, a celebrated auctioneer; and the notorious Orator Henley. This piece, as well as a later one entitled "Taste," was a satire upon one of the fashionable manias of the day—the rage for antique coins, antique sculptures, old masters, old china, &c.—which rendered the auction room a morning lounge *à la mode*. None of the three entertainments at present enumerated were published. "The Knights," which followed "The Auction," was the first piece printed. To this comedy was added a "Cat Concert," as a burlesque upon the Italian opera; for which he engaged a man so celebrated for his imitations of the grimalkin race that he was called Cat-Harris. One morning, when he did not come to rehearsal, Foote sent Shuter to seek him; he lived in a court in the Minories, and the messenger, not being certain of the house, commenced a cat-solo. Presently a man thrust his head out of a window and answered in the same enchanting strain. "You are the fellow

"I want," cried Shuter, "come along, we can't begin the cat piece without you."

Foote had already spent two fortunes, and a third was about this time left him by a relation of his mother's. He again set up a carriage; and to celebrate this third acquisition, emblazoned upon its panels the motto, "*Iterum, iterum, iterumque.*" He now recommenced his old course of extravagance, and between 1749 and 1752 passed the greater portion of his time in Paris. In the latter year he presented Garrick with his comedy of "Taste," the profits of which were given to Worsdale, a poor painter. The satire of the comedy is very pungent. It turns upon the tricks and humbug of portrait painters and their sitters; upon a fashionable auctioneer, who employs a fellow he has found painting sign-boards, to manufacture old-masters. A "Susanna," not worth £20, becomes, by the addition of a little lumber-room dirt and the application of the spaltham pot, a Guido, worth £150.

By the close of 1753, Foote had squandered his third fortune, and made his re-entrance upon the stage in the character of Buck in his own farce of "The Englishman in Paris." This was followed by "The Englishman Returned from Paris." In these farces we have the original of the frog-eating, grimacing, dancing, irascible, ridiculous creature which, until within these twenty or thirty years, was the popular English idea of a Frenchman. Foote's next venture

for fame and money was less excusable. It was the burlesque lectures upon Macklin, which have been already described in the previous chapter. In five nights Foote realized about £500 by the caricature, while soon afterwards, as we have seen, poor Macklin was gazetted in the Bankruptcy Court.

In February, 1757, he produced his celebrated comedy of "The Author." The condition of authorship is excellently, but not ill-naturedly satirised in the character of Vamp and his publisher Cape. But the most famous personage of the comedy was Mr. Cadwallader, played by Foote himself. His "make-up" was so wonderful, that on the first night the audience were doubtful of his identity. Enormously corpulent, a broad unmeaning stare upon his face, an awkward gait, a loud voice, an incoherent way of speaking, his head moving restlessly towards his left shoulder, his mouth gaping with unuttered things, and a trick of sucking his wrist. The original of this caricature, a Mr. Ap-Rice, a Welsh gentleman with whom the mimic was on intimate terms, was in the boxes, vastly enjoying the acting, without a moment dreaming that the fun applied to himself. This unconsciousness, however, was of short duration; for from that time he could never enter a coffee-house, or be seen in any public place, without pointings and whisperings, and "There's Cadwallader!" or some one crying after him, "This is Becky, my

dear Becky !” a phrase frequently repeated in the play. At length, after it had had a long run to crowded houses, Mr. Ap-Rice solicited and obtained the protection of the Lord Chamberlain; and on the night of Foote’s benefit, the same on which he and Kitty Clive appeared as Shylock and Portia, an order came down for its suppression.

In the meantime he continued to sustain various parts in the old comedies in addition to those written by himself, and was once advertised to play Polonius, but thought better of it before night came.

At the end of the season he went over to Ireland.

The following passage from a letter written from Dublin, and published in the “Gentleman’s Magazine” for 1775, relates a curious anecdote, and shows Foote in a new character:—

“I suppose you have heard of the famous comedian, Mr. Foote. He is in this town at this time, and is a man of much humour. He took into his head to take a lodging in a remote part of the town in order to set up the lucrative business of fortune-telling. After he had got his room hung with black, and his dark lantern, together with such people about him as knew the people of fashion in this great city, he gave out handbills to let them know that there was a man to be met with at such a place who wrote down people’s fortunes without asking them any questions. As his room was quite dark, the light from his lantern excepted, he was in

less danger of being discovered, so that he carried on the deception with great success for many days; insomuch that he is said to have cleared £30 a day at 2s. 6d. a head."

From Dublin he migrated to Edinburgh, and thence back to the Irish capital, where he was received in the best society, even at the table of the Lord-Lieutenant, and made a large sum of money. It was at this period he produced his first draft of "The Minor," the satire of which was directed against Whitfield and his followers. But whether it was that dissent had gained too strong a footing in Dublin, or that the audience failed to catch its wit, the piece was a failure.

"What of your comedy, Mr. Foote?" inquired a frequenter of the Bedford, upon his return to England; "We hear you found it dangerous to ridicule what is said in a church." "Why should I find it dangerous to ridicule what is said in a church," he replied, "if it deserves ridicule? Is not the crime greater if you pick a pocket at church; and is the additional reason why a man should *not* have done it, to be the only argument why he should not be punished for doing it? You call profaneness an offence; you will not have ignorant men idly invoke the name or attributes of the Supreme; and may not I ridicule a fanatic whom I think mischievous because he is for ever polluting that name with blasphemous associations; mixing it with the highest,

the meanest and most trivial things ; degrading Providence to every low and vulgar occasion of life ; crying out he is buffeted by Satan, if only bit by fleas, and when able to catch them, triumphing with texts of Scripture over the blessing specially vouchsafed ?”*

“The Minor,” re-written, was produced at Drury Lane with prodigious success, crowds besieging the doors nightly. Two new characters were added, and an Epilogue spoken by Doctor Squintem, in which every peculiarity of Whitfield’s was reproduced to a T. This comedy is, perhaps, his best work. It brought forth an angry pamphlet from one of the preacher’s friends, to which Foote wrote a reply, which may be classed among the cleverest

* The last paragraph contains no exaggeration. In Cooke’s “Life of Foote,” there is a genuine letter of Whitfield’s, in which the Divine name is mixed up with indecencies in a manner positively blasphemous, and which the most daring satirist would not dared to have imitated. His exaltation of the most abandoned women and the vilest criminals who pretended they had found the saving grace is well known. Foote’s ridicule of the noted preacher has been greatly censured. But it was not in human nature to silently endure the opprobrium and denunciations which he and his followers unceasingly cast upon all connected with the dramatic art. Abuse frequently proceeded to acts of violence ; these fanatics would swoop down on country fairs, take forcible possession of the booths, and drive away the poor strollers ; after a fiery sermon, in which all players and playhouses were condemned to eternal perdition, a band of zealots rushed forth and set fire to a new theatre just erected at Glasgow. Foote did not ridicule religion, but blasphemous fanaticism.

emanations of his pen; it was at once scholarly, satirical, argumentative, and an excellent defence of his profession.

I have space for only one short extract, in which he admirably answers the Maw-worms who would abolish public amusements.

“What institution, human or divine, has not been perverted by bad men to bad purposes? *I wish we had not a notorious instance before us* [alluding to Whitfield and his followers]. Men have been drunk with wine, must then every vine be destroyed? Religion has been made a cloak for debauchery and fraud, must we then extirpate all religion? While there are such cities in the world as London, amusements must be found out, as occupation for the idle and relaxation for the active. All that sound policy can do is to take care that such only shall be established as are, if not useful in their tendency, at least harmless in their consequences.”

The following summer, in conjunction with Murphy, he opened Drury Lane for a short season, the principal event of which was the production of “The Liar;” the plot, taken from the Spanish, had already been used by Corneille in “Le Menteur,” and by Steele in his “Lying Lover.” This comedy, a few years back, formed the principal attraction at the Olympic for more than one hundred nights. It was followed by “The Orators,” produced at the time that Sheridan was delivering his lectures upon

oratory, in which the popular mania for public speaking and for debating societies, especially for one called the "Robin Hood," was excellently satirized; again he introduced the griping publisher and ground-down literary hack. How little exaggerated these pictures are may be fully proved by the biographies of Johnson, Goldsmith, and many others; indeed, it has been suggested, and with much probability, that poor Nol himself sat for one of the portraits. But the sensation of the piece was the introduction of a noted printer, publisher, and alderman of Dublin, one-legged George Faulkner, whose physical misfortune, conceit, and eccentricities were caricatured under the name of Peter Paragraph. Lord Chesterfield maliciously advised him to take law proceedings against his libeller, never thinking, however, that he would follow his counsel; in this he was mistaken, for Faulkner did commence an action. Two months afterwards, the incorrigible mimic introduced a new scene into the comedy, in which he caricatured counsel, judge, and jury, and all the proceedings of the trial, and performed it at the Haymarket.

In his next piece, "The Mayor of Garratt," he flew at higher game, and, as Matthew Mug, held up to public laughter the peculiarities of the Duke of Newcastle. It was of this nobleman he said that he always appeared as if he had lost an hour in the morning, and was looking for it all day. To keep

this patrician company, he pilloried a certain justice of the peace, fish-salesman, and ex-militia officer, as Major Sturgeon. The whole comedy is overflowing with wit and humour, and one of its characters, Jerry Sneak, has become the type of henpecked husbands. There is also Peter Primer, the pedantic country schoolmaster, who believes himself to be the wisest of pedagogues, another capital portrait. After "The Mayor of Garratt" came "The Patron," in which Lord Melcombe appeared under the name of Sir Thomas Lofty, a man who, utterly destitute of all capacity, yet sets himself up as a patron of literature, and, by means of fulsome dedications, is preyed upon by a band of ignorant scribblers.

At the opening of each season—for the summer performances at the Haymarket were now regularly established, he brought out a new piece; 1765 saw the production of "The Commissary." Commissaries and army contractors now came under the lash of his pen—men grown rich by the Seven Years' War, who had no claim to position or consideration beyond their riches. Far less justifiable, however, was his introduction of Dr. Arne, the composer, as Dr. Catgut.

The most splendid success attended all these productions, and the monetary result was equally satisfactory; no man gave better dinners, placed choicer wines upon his table, or drove finer horses; no man was more courted or better received in

good society. When the Duke of York returned from the Continent, a contemporary says, "he went first to his mother's, then to His Majesty's, and directly from them to Mr. Foote's."

It was about this time that he met with the unfortunate accident by which he lost a limb. While on a visit at Lord Mexborough's, vanity induced him to follow the hunt upon a blood horse; scarcely had he started ere the animal threw him; the fall fractured one of his legs in two places, compelling amputation. Even while the operation was being performed, the incorrigible wit made jests upon his loss. "I shall now be able to imitate George Faulkner to the life," he said. But, however lightly he appeared to treat this misfortune, it cast a bitterness over the rest of his life. O'Keefe says it was pitiable to see him leaning against the wall of his stage dressing-room, while his servant dressed his cork leg to suit the character in which his master was to appear. He looked sorrowful; but instantly resuming his high comic humour and mirth, he hobbled forward, entered the scene, and gave the audience what they expected, their plenty of laughter and delight. But after all, the accident was not an unalloyed evil, as in consideration of it the Duke of York obtained from the King a patent by which Foote was legally permitted to keep open the Haymarket Theatre between the 14th of May and the 14th of September. He thereupon

rebuilt the house, gave it a handsome frontage, and commenced his season in May, 1767, with a burlesque entitled "The Tailors, a Tragedy for Warm Weather." The MS. of this play had been sent anonymously to Dodsley's shop, with an unsigned note offering the free use of it; and, strange to say, although the piece obtained a great success, and kept the stage for half a century, the authorship was never avowed, and still remains a mystery.

The satire of the piece appears to have given great umbrage to the craft. Years afterwards, in 1805, Dowton announced its revival for his benefit, an announcement which roused the furious indignation of the knights of the needle; they held a meeting and vowed to oppose it with might and main, menacing letters were written to the *bénéficiaire* informing him that seventeen thousand tailors would attend to hiss and hoot the play. One, who signed himself "DEATH," wrote to inform one of the proprietors of the theatre that ten thousand more could be there if necessary. In defiance of these doughty threats, however, the bill was unchanged. But when the night came it was soon discovered that the brotherhood meant deeds as well as words. In the gallery they contrived to secure every seat except two, and to monopolise nearly every other part of the house. Dowton's appearance was the signal for the uproar to begin; a pair of shears was thrown at him; he offered

twenty pounds reward to any person who would point out the offender, but no one would betray him. Finding the audience would not listen to a word, Dowton offered to change the piece to "The Village Lawyer," but the riot had assumed proportions too formidable to be appeased, and the uproar within was sustained by a mob of tailors without. A magistrate was sent for, special constables called out; but they were helpless against the numbers of the rioters, and the disturbance continued to increase until the arrival of a troop of Life Guards, who seized sixteen and put the remainder to flight.

With "The Tailors" was produced his celebrated "Devil on Two Sticks." It was now the medical profession that was the object of his attack. As the President of a College of Physicians, he brought the celebrated Sir William Brown upon the stage; the make-up was complete—wig, coat, eye-glass, gait, all but one special feature, the doctor carried a muff, a circumstance which Foote seems to have forgotten. One night Sir William came to see his imitation, remarked the omission, sent him his own muff next morning with a polite letter, begging his acceptance of the same in order to render the figure perfect. By this comedy Foote realised between three and four thousand pounds. At the end of the season he went over to Dublin. Staying at Bath on the road, he fell in with some card-sharpers,

to whom he lost five hundred in ready money, together with twelve hundred he had deposited in the bank, and landed in Ireland almost penniless. But his usual good-luck still stood by him. The "Devil on Two Sticks" was almost as great a success in the Irish capital as it had been in the English.

His next piece was "The Maid of Bath," in which he severely satirised the vices and follies of Bath society. In "The Lame Lover" he did battle against the trickeries of the law, and in the title rôle raised a laugh against himself. In "The Nabob," he made an onslaught on those Anglo-Indians, who, about this time, were making large fortunes by such doubtful means, and upon the corruption of the rotten boroughs. "The Christian Club" wait upon Sir Matthew Mite to offer him the nomination of the members for the borough. The Club has taken that name "because," explains one, "from strict union and brotherly kindness we hang together like the primitive Christians, we have all things in common." That is to say, they equally divide all the bribes. "Why, I remember," says one, "at the election some time ago, when I took up my freedom, I could get but thirty guineas for a new pair of jack boots; while Tom Ramskin over the way had a fifty-pound-note for a pair of washleather breeches."

Sir Matthew asks their terms. "Why, we could not

have afforded you one under three thousand at least; but as your honour has a mind to deal in the gross, we shall charge you but five for the both." As they are leaving the house, the speaker's eyes fall upon one of the black servants, whom he offers to make a member of the corporation of Bribe 'em. "Why, you would not submit to accept of a negro?" cries the Nabob. "Our present members, for aught we know, may be of the same complexion, your honour," is the reply; "for we have never set eyes on them yet." "But you could not think of electing a black?" persists Mite. "That makes no difference to us: the Christian Club has ever been persuaded that a good candidate, like a good horse, can't be of a bad colour." Again, these patriots declare that "the Christian Club may have some fears of the gallows, but they don't value damnation a farthing."

A characteristic anecdote of Foote is told in connection with this piece. Two gentlemen recently returned from the East Indies, believing themselves pointed at in the character of Matthew Mite, bought two cudgels, and one night waited upon Foote at his lodgings in Suffolk Street, resolved to inflict condign punishment upon him there and then. He received them in his drawing-room with a politeness so marked, that their hostile intentions melted into remonstrances, which he interrupted with a request that they would take coffee before

they opened their business. This they refused; and represented the insults which persons of character and fortune had sustained from his licentious pen. Foote assured them, in the most solemn manner, that he had no particular person in view, and that he intended to satirise only the *unworthy* part of the nabob gentry. The end of the business was they remained chatting amicably until four in the morning, and dined there the same day. From that time forth none were louder in their praises of his wit, politeness, and hospitality; they attended the theatre every night during the run of the piece, and applauded it as heartily as any one there.

Sentimental comedy, and romances of the Pamela School, were burlesqued in "Piety in Pattens, or the Handsome Housemaid," played by puppets, because, he stated, with a cruel and most unjust cut at the actors of the period, the players were incapable. In this he also held up to ridicule the Stratford Jubilee. The satire was not a success, and created at one time something approaching to a riot. When asked by a lady if the puppets were to be as large as life, he replied, "Oh, dear no, madam, not much above the size of Garrick!" 1772, a year of great commercial failures, brought forth the "Bankrupt." The title explains the aim of the piece, which was directed against the rogueries of trade, and the deficiencies of the law for their punishment. In the same year he paid a visit to

Ireland. Upon his return to London he produced "The Cozeners." Fashionable preachers, sinecures, and the sale of Government places here came under his lash. In Dr. Simony we have a portrait of the notorious Dr. Dodd; and in the character of Mrs. Fleece'em, we have that of Mrs. Rudd, a smuggler, thief, milliner, match-maker, and procuress, a notorious criminal of the day. Lord Chesterfield's Letters are also admirably satirised in the person of Toby.

Misfortunes, provoked by his unsparing pen, and which embittered and shortened his last days, were close upon him now. He had openly stated that in the character of Lady Kitty Crocodile, in his new comedy of "A Trip to Calais," he intended to hold up to public censure the notorious Duchess of Kingston. Upon this threat coming to the lady's ears, she used her influence with the Lord Chamberlain to prevent the piece being licensed, and employed one Jackson,* a hedge parson, to libel the author in newspapers and pamphlets. The attack was so severe, that he, at length, offered to suppress the obnoxious scenes of the comedy if the Duchess would put an end to the war. A contemptuous and abusive letter, in which she called him a buffoon,

* This same Jackson, under the pseudonym of Curtius, tortured Garrick's last days by anonymous letters containing mysterious threats of exposure unless he was bribed to silence. These professed libellers have been by no means uncommon characters.

a merry-andrew, and a theatrical assassin, drew forth a reply from the comedian which may be placed among the most poignant and admirable productions of his wit.

Unable to touch his arch enemy upon the stage, Foote resolved to scarify her tool; he remodelled "The Trip to Calais" into "The Capuchin," and, as Dr. Viper, gibbeted him with all the malice he could command. The battle created an immense sensation at the time; and on the first night of the new comedy the theatre was packed with friends and enemies—the latter predominating, but not sufficiently to prevent its success—and it was acted throughout the season. Stung to fury by this terrible satire, Jackson carried on the fight with yet greater malignancy. A riot was attempted on the next opening night, but defeated by Foote's clever tact. As a last stake, Jackson bribed a discharged coachman of Foote's to bring a hideous charge against him. Numbers who had been tortured by his cruel wit became partisans of his detractor. But, on the other hand, he had many firm and powerful friends; his theatre was nightly filled with all that was noble in rank and intellect, and the King, to testify his sympathy, commanded a performance.

There was a trial; but the infamous charges completely broke down, and the jury, without a moment's hesitation, returned a verdict of "Not

Guilty." As soon as the acquittal was pronounced, Murphy rushed away to Suffolk Street with the glad tidings, and seeing Foote at the window, waved his hat in sign of victory. When he entered the room he found him stretched upon the floor in violent hysterics.

He never recovered the blow. He let the Haymarket to Colman for an annuity of £1,600, and certain other considerations. He reappeared in the following May in "The Devil on Two Sticks;" but how changed! His cheeks were lank and withered, his eyes had lost all their old intelligence, and his whole person appeared sunk and emaciated. A few hissed, but his friends and the impartial part of the audience cheered him. He rallied a little in the course of the play; but the public accepted him rather for what he had been than what he was. He appeared in three or four other characters; but towards the end of the season, while performing in "The Devil on Two Sticks," he was seized with a paralytic stroke. A few weeks at Brighton slightly recovered him, and in the autumn his physicians ordered him to the south of France. But he never got further than Dover, where he died on the 21st of October, 1777. He was buried in the cloisters of Westminster, by torchlight, where he lies undistinguished by a memorial of any kind.

"Did you think he would be so soon gone?" writes Johnson to Mrs. Thrale. "'Life,' says

Falstaff, 'is a shuttle.' He was a fine fellow in his way, and the world is really impoverished by his sinking glories. I would have his life written with diligence." Such a valediction from the lips of this great and good man is sufficient to prove that Foote was not altogether the irredeemable scoundrel that he is generally painted. With all his faults he possessed much generosity of disposition. He was an excellent master to his servants, and would retain actors upon his establishment out of friendship, long after they ceased to be useful to him. During one of his visits to Dublin he was taken so ill at rehearsal that he announced himself unable to play that night. "Ah! sir," said one of the actors, "if you do not play we shall have no Christmas dinner." "If my playing gives you a Christmas dinner, play I will." And, although very ill, he kept his word. It has been already recorded how he gave the profits of "Taste" to the poor painter Worsdale, who had been so badly treated by Sir Godfrey Kneller. He was always ready to honour talent in preference to rank. During the run of the "Minor," when seats could not be found for noblemen, he contrived to secure a box for Gray and Mason. Players and authors were always to be found at his table, and not even the comfort of royalty was preferred to theirs.

No man was ever more free from toadyism: rank was no shield against his wit, which would strike as

hard at a duke as at a menial. "Well, Foote, here I am, ready as usual to swallow all your good things," said the Duke of Cumberland, one night, in the green-room of the Haymarket. "Really, Your Royal Highness must have an excellent digestion," replied the wit, "for you never bring any up again." A Scotch peer, notoriously thrifty, served his wine in very small glasses, and descanted eloquently upon its age and excellence, "It is very *little* of its age," observed Foote. Sometimes this humour amounted to insolence; as, for instance, after dining at a nobleman's house, not to his satisfaction, and finding the servants ranged in the hall when he was departing, he inquired for the cook and butler, and upon their stepping forward, said to the first, "Here's half-a-crown for my eating;" and to the other, "here's five shillings for my wine; but, by —, I never had so bad a dinner for the money in my life." Dining with Lord Townshend after a duel, he suggested that his lordship might have got rid of his antagonist in a more deadly way. "How?" inquired his host. "By inviting him to a dinner like this, and poisoning him," was the sharp reply. The Duke of Norfolk, who was rather too fond of the bottle, asked him in what new character he should go to a masquerade. "Go sober," answered Foote. Being taken into White's, one day, a nobleman remarked to him that his handkerchief was hanging out of his pocket. "Thank you,

my lord," he replied, "thank you ; you know the company better than I do." A rich contractor was holding forth upon the instability of the world. "Can you account for it, sir?" he asked, turning to Foote. "Well, not very clearly," he responded, "unless we suppose it was built by contract." "Why are you for ever humming that air?" he asked of a gentleman who had no idea of time. "Because it haunts me." "No wonder, for you are for ever murdering it."

Garrick, of whose great fame he was undoubtedly envious, was a constant butt for his sarcasms. At one of Foote's dinner-parties an announcement was made of the arrival of Mr. Garrick's servants. "Oh, let them wait," he replied to his footman, "but be sure you lock up the pantry!" One day, a gentleman, while conversing with Foote, was speaking of Garrick having reflected upon some person's parsimony, and ended by observing, "Why did he not take the beam out of his own eye before attacking the mote in other people's?" "Because," retorted Foote, "he is not sure of selling the timber." "Where on earth can it be gone?" said Foote, when Garrick dropped a guinea at the Bedford one night, and was searching for it in vain. "To the devil, I think," answered the actor, irritably. "Let you alone, David, for making a guinea go further than any one else," was the reply.

One day a French gentleman was admiring

his children and inquired "*Sont-ils par la même mère ?*" "Yes," was the reply, "they are by the same mare, but I doubt whether they are by the same horse." At a dinner a young nobleman, famous for profanity, when called upon for a toast, gave "the Devil!" "Certainly, we have no objection to any of your lordship's friends," replied Foote, coolly. Seeing written upon a pane of glass with a diamond the words, "My Lord D — has the softest kissing lips in the world," he added underneath :—

"Then as like as two chips
Are his head and his lips."

He could never forego his jest, however solemn the occasion. He had been to the funeral of Holland, the actor, whose father was a baker. "Poor fellow!" he said in the Bedford that evening, the tears scarcely dry upon his cheeks, "I have been to see him shoved into the family oven." He once observed of an actress, who was remarkably awkward with her arms, that she kept the Graces at arms' length.

Johnson said he considered that Foote surpassed every one he had ever heard in humorous narrative; and that although Garrick surpassed him in gaiety, delicacy, and elegance, Foote provoked much more laughter. A gentleman who had conceived a prejudice against him, related to Boswell his first

meeting with him at dinner. "Having no good opinion of the fellow," he said, "I was resolved not to be pleased. I went on eating my dinner pretty sullenly, affecting not to mind him. But the dog was so very comical, that I was obliged to lay down my knife and fork, throw myself back in my chair, and laugh it out. No, sir, he was irresistible."

It is strange that while all the other English humourists of the eighteenth century have received such ample appreciation, the plays of Foote should be so little read. To those who would form a perfect conception of the manners of a hundred years ago, his works are invaluable; there is not a folly, a vice, a sham of the time which they do not expose; they are frequently coarse, but so was the age, and a true mirror must reflect what is presented to it. But their coarseness is palliated by real wit and well-written dialogue; his characters, it is true, are too frequently caricatures founded on some physical deformity or eccentricity of manner, but they are usually typical, and their humour springs out of the absurdities common to all humanity; and if they display no very profound knowledge of the mainsprings of human nature, they are seldom unnatural, and are almost uniformly drawn with justness and vigour.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FAMOUS MIMIC.

His Parentage—An Interview with Garrick—Disappointed Hopes
—Success in Dublin—An Indignant Manager—Garrick in a Fix
—An Eccentric Lady—Rich and his Favourite Cat—An Extraordinary Monologue.

THERE is scarcely a more famous theatrical character of this period than Foote's pupil, associate, and brother mimic, TATE WILKINSON, upon whose Memoirs I have already drawn so freely.

He was born in 1739; his father, Dr. John Wilkinson, who was chaplain of the Savoy, and to Frederick, Prince of Wales, obtained a painful notoriety from an infringement of the New Marriage Act, for which he was condemned to fourteen years' transportation. Death, however, saved him from disgrace; and young Tate was thrown destitute upon the world. As a boy, like Foote, he had been famous among his parent's friends for imitations of actors, and he now became a hanger on at the theatres, and a pupil of Rich's. Woffington hearing that he was in the habit of mimicking her took a

great dislike to him, and made Rich promise he would not engage him in any capacity whatever. Ned Shuter, however, took compassion on the lad's forlorn condition, and let him play a small part for his benefit. A friend of his mother's obtained a letter of recommendation from Lord Mansfield to David Garrick, then one of the lessees of Drury Lane:—"I marched up and down Southampton Street three or four times before I dared rap at this great man's door," he writes, "as fearing instant dismissal might follow, or what appeared to me almost as dreadful, if graciously admitted, how should I be able to move, walk, or speak before him?" He is admitted to this august presence, and his picture of the more absurd side of Garrick's character is very amusing, though a little malicious.

"Mr. Garrick glanced his scrutinizing eye first at me, then at the letter, and so alternately; at last—'Well, sir—hey—what, now you are a stage candidate? Well, sir, let me have a taste of your quality.' I, distilled almost to jelly with my fear, attempted a speech from Richard, and another from Essex, which he encouraged by observing I was so much frightened that he could not form any judgment of my abilities, but assured me it was not a bad omen, as fear was by no means a sign of want of merit, but often the contrary. We then chatted for a few minutes, and I felt myself more easy, and requested leave to repeat a few speeches in imitation of the then principal

stage representatives. 'Nay now,' says Garrick, 'sir, you must take care of this, for I used to call myself the first at this business.' I luckily began with an imitation of Foote. It is difficult here to determine whether Garrick hated or feared Foote the most: sometimes the one, sometimes the other was predominant; but, from the attention of a few minutes, his looks brightened, the glow of his countenance was transfused to mine, and he eagerly desired a repetition of the same speech. I was animated, forgot Garrick was present, and spoke at perfect ease. 'Hey—now! Now—what—all,' says Garrick. 'How, really this—is—is (with his usual hesitation and repetition of words)—why—well—well—well. Do call on me again on Monday at eleven, and you may depend upon every assistance in my power.'"

At the end of the second interview he was engaged for the ensuing season at the modest salary of thirty shillings a week. His imagination ran riot, and he never doubted but that in the autumn he would see his name in the newspapers in large capitals—" *The part of OTHELLO, by a young gentleman!*" Alas for his hopes! His opening part was the torch-bearer to Romeo, in the last act of "Romeo and Juliet," and his succeeding ones, gentlemen-in-waiting! His remuneration was equally disappointing, for the theatre being open only three nights in the week during the first month, reduced his salary to fifteen

shillings. A portion of the preceding summer, however, he had acted at Maidstone in a company made up of some secondary London actors, where he had played Romeo, George Barnwell, Shore, Orestes, &c., for an average of about six shillings a week, and a benefit, his profits of which amounted to one shilling and sixpence and *two pieces of candle*. His *début*, he confesses, was in no respect a brilliant one. Worse than that, certain persons of the company whom Garrick had desired to report to him upon the behaviour of the tyro, reported unfavourably.

One day, just before he was starting to fulfil a Dublin engagement, Foote was dining at Garrick's, and the conversation turned upon imitation. "Egad," cried David, "there is a young fellow engaged with me who I really think is superior to either of us at mimicry. I used to think myself well at it, but I give him the preference." "I should like to hear him," said Foote. Wilkinson was forthwith sent for, and so pleased the great wit, that he took him away with him to Ireland. In Dublin, Tate was well received by some aristocratic friends of his family, and as the new Marriage Act was very unpopular there, he became an object of great sympathy on account of his father's misfortunes.

So great was the success of his imitations, that the elder Sheridan, who was the manager of the

theatre, wrote to Garrick to obtain leave for him to remain in Dublin until the middle of February. A-propos of Sheridan, he tells a most amusing anecdote. When his benefit was being discussed, that gentleman proposed that he should give imitations of the actors and actresses then employed in the theatre. Tate demurred, urging that it would annoy them. Sheridan insisted, almost angrily, "the more it vexes the actors and actresses, the greater relish it will give the audience." At last, "like a fool," he says, "in my knowledge of mankind and the human heart, I proposed to imitate *him* : 'Your rank in the theatre, and being a gentleman so well known in Dublin, on and off the stage, must naturally occasion any striking imitation of yourself to have a wonderful effect.' Hogarth's pencil could not testify more astonishment. He turned red and pale alternately ; his lips quivered ; it was some time before he could speak ; he took a candle from off the table, and showing me the room door—when at last his words found utterance—said he never was so insulted. What, to be taken off by a buffoon upon his own stage ! And as to mimicry, what was it ? Why, a proceeding he never could countenance ; that he even despised Garrick and Foote for having introduced so mean an art ; and he then very politely desired me to walk down stairs."

He returns to London with all his blushing

honours thick upon him. But still he cannot propitiate "King David," by whom he is distinguished as "that d——d exotic."

An old friend comes to the rescue. While passing down St. James's Street, he hears his name shouted from a window. It is Foote, whom he has not met since his return from Dublin. Samuel invites him to dinner, and proposes that he shall play a part in the new farce, which he is about to produce at Drury Lane, entitled "Diversions of the Morning." Tate is doubtful of "King David's" permission :

" 'You must plainly see,' says his host, 'that that dirty hound Garrick' (this was Foote's usual way of speaking of his good friend) 'does not mean to do you any service. I know his heart so well, that if you give me permission to ask for your first attempt upon his stage, and to be in my piece, the hound will refuse the moment I mention it; and though his little soul would rejoice to act Richard the Third in the dog-days before the hottest kitchen fire for a sop in the pan, yet I know his mean soul so perfectly, that if on his refusal I, with a grave face, tell him I have his figure exactly made and dressed as a puppet in my closet ready for public admiration, the fellow will not only consent to your acting, but what is more extraordinary, will lend me money, if I should say I want it.'"

I need not point out the malice of this description to those who have read my chapter on Garrick.

Nevertheless, Foote did gain his point, and Wilkinson appeared in the farce, with, he tells us, prodigious success. But some imitations of the Covent Garden actors, which he introduced, called forth so earnest a remonstrance from the sufferers, that Garrick interfered and forbade them for the future. But these had delighted the audience, and upon their omission on the second night, the whole house so clamorously demanded them, that the manager was obliged to give way :

“ ‘ Hey, why now, as they insist,’ says Garrick, ‘ I do not see that I am bound to run the hazard of a riot in my theatre to please the Covent Garden people; and if they are not satisfied with your serving up Mr. Foote as a dish, why, it is a pity you could not give me; but that you say is not possible with any hope of success. Why— now— haste, they are making a devilish noise; and as you have begun your taking off, why go on with it, and do what comes into your head, and do not in future plague me with your cursed tricks again.’ ”

Wilkinson takes him at his word, and imitates him in three of his favourite parts. From that time the imitations go on nightly. But while Wilkinson wins only applause and thirty shillings a week, Foote reaps a golden harvest.

After this he goes down to Portsmouth to act. Here is an exquisitely comical portrait of one of the company :—

“Mrs. White was a most extraordinary character, and worthy of record. Whenever Burden, her son-in-law, gave offence, which was almost perpetually, she used thus to harangue her daughter: ‘Ma’am, you have married a fellow beneath you; you played Lucy last night in “The Minor” better than Mrs. Cibber could have done, upon my *sould*, and yet this scoundrel would hurt such a divine *cretur*.’ ‘True, Mamma,’ replied her daughter, ‘but suppose he should cut his throat?’ ‘Let him cut his throat; but he won’t cut his throat, no such good luck. But I’ll tell you what, ma’am, if you contradict me, I’ll fell you at my feet, and trample over your corse, ma’am, for you’re a limb, ma’am; your father on his death-bed told me you were a limb. You are pure as a *erminded*, ma’am, and you sha’n’t live with your husband, ma’am; you have no business, ma’am, to live with your husband; the first women of quality, ma’am, don’t live with their husbands, ma’am; the best women of *fashioned* upon yearth don’t live with their husbands, ma’am.’”

At another time this daughter, while being instructed in the acting of a part, was told that a certain sentence, being a parenthesis, should be spoken in a different tone to the rest. “A parenthesis! What’s that?” she inquired. The mother, who happened to be present, angry at this betrayal of her daughter’s ignorance, burst forth: “O, what an infernal limb of an actress you’ll make! What!

not know the meaning of *prentice* ! Why *prentice*, ma'am, is the plural of *prentices* !” The complaints of this original to the Dublin stage-manager upon her daughter's wrongs, are equally comic.

“ Sir, you have not used my daughter well, 'pon my *sould*, and Barry has left her in 'Love's Last Shift' ever since she came. Now, sir, the poor dear creature wants the breeches parts, and if she has them not, Mr. Barry will have his benches pulled. Ask Mr. Barry what he thinks my daughter came over to Ireland for ? Then if you do not know, I will tell you, sir—the breeches parts, and she expects *all* the breeches parts, sir, and now you know Bet's mind.”

While Tate, however, was at Portsmouth, Garrick happening to be on a visit to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, saw him play Hamlet one night, and finding that he stood well with the officers and best people of the town, took him into great favour, promenaded arm-in-arm with him, bespoke a night at the theatre, and hoped that Wilkinson would appear in a favourite part.

Upon his return to London, Garrick continued his favour, invited him to breakfast, and, better still in the actor's estimation, gave him parts. However, it was his last season at Drury Lane.

He now made overtures to Rich. “ Well, Muster Williamskin, you are much improved since I began to larn you. I think I must engage you : name

your own terms," said the eccentric manager. Terms were arranged, and Wilkinson proposed to appear in Foote's "Minor," in which the author with whom he had recently quarrelled, had satirized him under the name of "Shift." Eager, for revenge, Tate now proposed to return the compliment. No man was more sensitive to ridicule than Foote, who ridiculed everybody, and upon hearing of this intention, immediately sought out Rich, and with many more expletives than I transcribe, thus addressed him:—

" ' You old hound, if you dare let that pug-nosed Wilkinson take any liberty with me as to mimicry, I will bring you yourself, Rich, on the stage. And if he dares to appear in my character in 'The Minor,' I will instantly produce your old stupid, ridiculous self, with your three cats, and your hound of a mimic altogether, next week at Drury Lane, for the general diversion of the pit, boxes, and galleries, and that will be paying you, you squinting old Hecate, too great a compliment.' " After Foote had departed, denouncing vengeance on him and his cats, Rich, with a most woeful countenance, met Mr. Sparks, one of his actors, " Why, *Muster Sparklish*," he said, " *Muster Footseye* has been here, and he says if I let *Muster Williamskin* act his parts upon the stage, he will write parts for me, my cat, and *Muster Williamskin*, and bring us all upon the stage; so we musn't act what we intended." After much persuasion, however, the manager con-

sented to brave "Mr. Footseye's" wrath; "but he was still frightened," adds Tate, "and I believe dreaded an affront on his favourite cat more than on himself."

So great was his success that Rich offered him six pounds a week, benefits, and an engagement for three years; but Tate loved "to be free as air," and refused to bind himself. The fact was that, accustomed to be the star of provincial towns, he could not reconcile himself to the inferior position into which he must of necessity have sunk in the great London theatre. So after a while he went back in to the country.

In Norwich a laughable mistake threw an ill odour upon his previous popularity. He had advertised for his benefit, in imitation of Foote, "that he would treat all the ladies and gentlemen with TEA." The people took the announcement literally, and by three o'clock in the afternoon the town was in a mob about the theatre doors; the talk was how he would be able to find cups and saucers for such a number of people. His imitations of Garrick, Barry, and the rest were not understood, as probably not one of the audience had seen any of them; and the whole affair was regarded as a hoax, and resented in no gentle manner.

While at Norwich his old friend Foote made him an offer to join his Haymarket company, which he accepted, and a reconciliation took place which was

interrupted only with life. The Haymarket Theatre, he tells us, at that time could boast only of a few trumpery scenes, no wardrobe but such as was hired from a second-hand clothes shop in Monmouth Street, and stage properties were less known there than in the most distant rustic company that scoured the country round.

At the end of the season Wilkinson again returned to the provinces. But after a time grew weary of his wandering life and invested all his savings, some two thousand pounds, in the lease-ship of the York, Hull, and Leeds theatres, known as the York circuit, which he conducted for upwards of thirty years with great success. Many five actors and actresses, who afterwards became the idols of the London stage, owed their first advancement to his discrimination; among others, Kemble, Fawcet, and the elder Mathews, Mrs. Jordan, and Mrs. Siddons. As he grew old he became as eccentric as any character that figures in his Memoirs; the stories related of his peculiarities would fill a volume.

I cannot forbear quoting an extraordinary monologue which the elder Mathews used to give in imitation of him. He had contracted a habit of jumbling together in one speech half a dozen different subjects, and of twisting names with a perversity worthy of old Rich. The following scene took place after he had been away on a short

excursion. Upon a table in front of him lay Murphy's "Life of Garrick," at his feet a spaniel pup, and on the table a bottle of cough-drops:—

"I hope, sir," says Mathews, "you have enjoyed your trip, and not suffered from your exertions." "Why, as to *that*, *Mr. Madox*," answers Wilkinson, "not but I am glad I went, for the weather was very fine; and if it hadn't been for the firing of the pistols I should have enjoyed it very much; but to be sure Mrs. Siddons was all in all, not but I have a great disgust of women with black faces, it's never a pleasing sight—and the old women were hideous. But then her dignity was indeed wonderful! and if you ask me what is a Queen, I should say Mrs. Siddons. Still to come into the room when one's asleep, and run all over one's face—ugh!—is more than any one would like to imagine; and I have a particular horror of rats! At the same time when they carry fire-arms about their persons, and let them off close to your ear, all through a piece, it makes your head ache; and I've such a cough that I can't get a moment's sleep when I'm upon my back; and—what with Murphy's 'Life of Garrick'—I really have been a great sufferer all night. I've been recommended this bottle of drops to cure me, but I've been greatly disappointed in it. It's full of blunders and shamefully incorrect. I took three drops upon a lump of sugar and it made me very sick. Not but

Henry Johnstone, who by-the-bye, is a remarkably fine young man, but he does not know what he writes about when he asserts that Garrick had never played before the king. Now at the time 'The Chinese Festival' came out, Johnstone surprised me very much with his strength, for in the first place he threw little Lucky, the black boy, over a high bank, and carried Mr. Orford, who performed 'Captain Halpin' (reverse the order) on his back into a cavern, lifting him up as easily as I lift this puppy, so you must suppose he must be pretty strong; he's thorough-bred, and he'll let you hold him up by the tail without squeaking, as you see; but then he's a fine pantomime actor, sir. Still, as I said to Mrs. Wilkinson, where is there to be found such another as Mrs. Siddons?"

Tate Wilkinson died in 1808, and, spite of his eccentricities, universally regretted.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TRAGEDY QUEENS.

Mrs. Pritchard—Compared with Mrs. Siddons—Their Different Readings in *Lady Macbeth*—Mrs. Pritchard in the Banquet Scene—Mrs. Cibber—*Titania and Bottom*—Contemporary Descriptions of her Acting—Her Unhappy Domestic Life—A Sir Pandarus—Garrick's Valediction upon Her—George Anne Bellamy—Her Début—An Eccentric Duchess—A Romantic Abduction—Garrick Counter-checked—An Irishman Puzzled—An Actress's Vengeance—A Singular Marriage Contract—A Ladies' Battle—A Faded Beauty—The Last Chapter of a Sad Romance—Mrs. Spranger Barry—A Persecuted Pair—Her Second Husband—Twice a Widow—*Hamlet Fiddling an Irish Jig*—Mrs. Barry and Mrs. Siddons—An Unequal Contest—Mrs. Yates—Miss Younge—A Touch of Nature.

OF the ladies of this period precedence must be given both on chronological and artistic grounds to HANNAH PRITCHARD.

Her early career was very humble; as Miss Vaughan she acted at the fairs about the neighbourhood of London, and married a poor actor of little talent, named Pritchard. Then she appeared at the Haymarket in one of Fielding's pieces, and soon afterwards went over to Drury Lane. She held a leading position upon the London stage some ten years before Garrick appeared. In her youth she was attractive and genteel, and her simple yet

expressive manner, and admirable unaffected delivery of dialogue both in tragedy and comedy, charmed every spectator. In all characters of intrigue, mirth, and gaiety, as *Rosalind*, *Lady Brute*, *Estifania*, *Beatrice*, *Lady Townley*, *Lady Betty Modish*, she could not be surpassed, and even in her latter years, when her face and figure had become too full and coarse, the beautiful *Woffington* shrank from her rivalry. She was equally famous in scolds, as *Termagant*, *Doll Common*, *Mrs. Oakley*. Indeed it was agreed by all contemporaries that her comic powers exceeded her tragic. She raised the character of the Queen in "*Hamlet*," however, a part despised by modern actresses, to a grandeur and importance such as no other had ever imparted to it; and *Davies* says, in nothing was her loss regretted more than in that. As *Queen Katherine*, again, *Mrs. Siddons* could never shake her supremacy. In comparing the two as artistes, the palm must be given to *Mrs. Pritchard* on account of her versatility, which *Sarah Kemble* entirely lacked; she excelled in tragedy only. "When," says a contemporary, "*Mrs. Pritchard* plays *Merope* she is *Merope*, and nothing of herself appears; but all the character, the spirit of *Mr. Garrick*, the softness of *Mr. Barry*, and the melancholy of *Mrs. Cibber* attend them in whatever part they play; but *Mrs. Pritchard*, having no distinguishing marks of this kind, carries with her nothing that is peculiar to herself into the

character." Dibdin says, "She was everywhere great, everywhere impressive, everywhere feminine."

She is now chiefly remembered as Mrs. Siddons' greatest predecessor in Lady Macbeth. Great was the disputation at the appearance of the latter in that part over the comparative excellencies of the two ladies. Lord Harcourt said that Mrs. Siddons wanted the dignity, compass, and melody of Mrs. Pritchard; he considered her inferior in the banquet scene, and, although he approved of her dispensing with the taper,* and imitating the washing of the hands—effects impossible to the elder actress—he said her sigh was not so terrible, nor her voice so sleepy, yet articulate, as Mrs. Pritchard's.

The points made by the two actresses were different, as an instance, when Lady Macbeth is urging her husband to the murder of Duncan, her answer to his, "If we should fail?" was daring and scornful. "*We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we'll not fail.*" Mrs. Siddons' reply was subdued, "We fail! But screw your courage to the sticking-place, and we'll *not* fail." The former was decidedly the grander rendering. Davies finely describes her acting in the banquet scene:—

"Mrs. Pritchard showed admirable art in endeavouring to hide Macbeth's frenzy from the observation of the guests, by drawing their attention to conviviality. She smiled on one, whispered to

* See Vol. II., page 28.

another, and distantly saluted a third ; in short, she practised every possible artifice to hide the transaction that passed between her husband and the vision his disturbed imagination had raised. Her reproving and angry looks, which glanced towards Macbeth, at the same time, were mixed with marks of inward vexation and uneasiness. When at last, as if unable to support her feelings any longer, she rose from her seat, and seized his arm, and, with a half whisper of terror, said : “ *Are you a man ?* ” She assumed a look of such anger, indignation, and contempt as cannot be surpassed.”

It has been said, but the assertion is doubtful, she never read a line of Macbeth beyond what affected her own part. Dr. Johnson called her an inspired idiot. But, whatever might have been her intellectual calibre, she bore an irreproachable character in private life. “ Her voice as free from blemish as her fame,” writes Churchill. She was an immense favourite with all classes of people, and few actresses have ever been so sincerely beloved and powerfully patronized.

After thirty-eight years of toil, she took her farewell of the stage in 1768, as Lady Macbeth ; Garrick wrote an epilogue for the occasion. It was the last time he ever appeared as Macbeth ; he could never hope to find such another partner of his greatness. She survived her retirement only a few months.

The most famous representative at this period of

the tender and passionate heroines of tragedy was MRS. CIBBER.

Upon the death of his first wife, in 1733, Theophilus Cibber began to pay court to the charming Susanna Maria Arne, then little over twenty, the sister of the celebrated composer. She had already appeared as a singer at the Opera House, and her beautiful voice and sweet face had secured her success. What could possess so delicate a creature to listen to the addresses of such an ugly ruffian as Theophilus Cibber it is impossible to conceive, unless we ascribe it to that odd perversity of the feminine nature which has an affinity for its opposites, even when the opposites are monstrosities ; the match was said to have been against her inclination, but by whom it was coerced does not appear. Be it as it may, our Titania was married to this Bottom, and had bitter cause to repent it. It was now arranged that she should quit the lyric for the dramatic stage, and Colley gave her lessons in acting, In 1736 she made her *entrée* at Drury Lane as Zara, in Aaron Hill's tragedy of that name, and leaped at once to the highest position in her art. Each new character she represented was a new triumph. If half the praise heaped upon her by contemporaries were deserved she must have been a divine actress.

“ Her great excellence,” says Davics, “ consisted in that simplicity which needed no ornament, in

that sensibility which despised all art—there was in her person little or no elegance; in her countenance a small share of beauty; but nature had given her such symmetry of form and fine expression of feature, that she preserved all the appearance of youth long after she had reached to middle life—the harmony of her voice was as powerful as the animation of her look—in grief and tenderness, her eyes looked as if they swam in tears—in rage and despair they seemed to dart flashes of fire—in spite of the unimportance of her figure she maintained a dignity in her action and a grace in her step.” Tate Wilkinson says he could imitate Garrick, Quin, Mrs. Bellamy, Mrs. Crawford, &c., so as to give a very good idea of their manner, but Mrs. Cibber’s excellence was of that superior kind that he could only retain in his mind’s eye. “She was the best Ophelia that ever was either before or since; no eloquence could paint her distracted look, her fine acting in the mad scene.” Charming in everything she undertook, she seemed to be identified with Ophelia. Indeed she may be regarded as the creator of the feminine ideal of the part. Its principal interpreters before her had been Mrs. Betterton and Mrs. Booth, and the former had received, through Davenant, the traditions of the boy-actresses of the pre-Restoration period. Garrick had doubted her ability to play Constance (“King John”). “Don’t tell me, Mr. Garrick,” said Quin; “that woman has a heart,

and can do anything where passion is required." The elder actor was right. Davies says she had no successor in the part; even Mrs. Yates fell below her. "It was her most perfect character. When going off the stage, she uttered the words 'O Lord, my boy!' with such an emphatical scream of agony as will never be forgotten by those who heard her."

"Other actresses," writes Dibdin, "may have had more fire; but I believe that all tragic characters, truly feminine, greatly conceived, and highly written, had a superior representative in Mrs. Cibber than any other actress." Cumberland, however, gives us a more distinct picture of her style, and not so flattering a one. Describing her in *Calista* ("Fair Penitent") he says: "Mrs. Cibber, in a key high pitched, but sweet withal, sang, or rather recitivated Rowe's harmonious strain something in the manner of the Improvisatores; it was so extremely wanting in contrast that though it did not wound the ear it wearied it. When she had once recited two or three speeches, I could anticipate the manner of every succeeding one; it was like the long old legendary ballad of innumerable stanzas, every one of which is sung to the same tune, eternally chiming in the ear without variety or relief." It was thus the great actresses of the French classic stage recited, and once accustomed to these artificial cadences, they must, when given by a silvery voice and an accomplished artiste, full of

soul and passion, have imparted a peculiar charm to scenes of love and tenderness. All modes of expression, which are the outcome of genius, are beautiful, though divergence of taste value different modes comparatively. Cumberland's remarks, however, apply to a performance in 1746, before Garrick's natural style had superseded the artificiality of his predecessors, and such a revolution could not have been without effect upon an actress so constantly associated with him as was Mrs. Cibber.

But to return to her domestic life. Not content with squandering her salary and neglecting her, Mr. Cibber, jun., played the part of Sir Pandarus, and introduced into his house a young gentleman of fortune, gave him every opportunity of forming a close intimacy with his wife, borrowed £400 of him, and took a journey into France, leaving them together. She, perceiving the infamous game he was playing, and loathing him for it, went further than he intended, for she quitted his roof and went away with her lover to Windsor. When Theophilus returned, he brought her back, by force, and made her a prisoner in his house; from which her brother rescued her by the same means. She went back to her protector, who was a man of honour and sincerely attached to her. Theophilus now began to rave about his injured honour, which could only be healed by £5,000 damages. But the

Court saw through the infamous business, and awarded him ten guineas, while his wife accepted the protection of the man to whom she had been betrayed, and passed with him the remainder of her life, unblamed by a sympathising public. Theophilus, who was deeply in debt, had depended upon the *ruse* to clear himself; when it failed, his creditors threw him into the King's Bench. By means of charity and benefits he obtained his release; but despised by everybody, his father included, he sank into the lowest dissipation; managers would not engage him, as to his other virtues he added that of a mutinous disposition, and was continually stirring up strife among the actors. At length, in 1758, his miserable life was brought to an end; while crossing the Channel, to fulfil an engagement at Dublin, there was a terrible storm, the ship sank, and Theophilus Cibber was among the passengers who went to the bottom.

Mrs. Cibber survived him only eight years. Long previously she had been suffering from a disorder, the nature of which was only discovered after her death, and which frequently prevented her from acting. Her health was so precarious, and she was so subject to frequent relapses, that the newspapers ranked her amongst the dead nearly three months sooner than her decease. About a month before her death, the King commanded the comedy of "The Provoked Wife;" she was then indisposed,

but was supposed to be recovering some degree of health. Nothing could prevent her paying her duty to the King and Queen by performing the part of Lady Brute, which was one of her favourite characters. Her acting, when her health was so infirm, was generally believed to have been the cause of her death. It was her last appearance, and one month afterwards, in January 1766, she was carried from her house in Scotland Yard to the cloisters of the Abbey, where Mrs. Bracegirdle, Betterton, and so many others of the craft had gone before her.

"Then tragedy died with her," said Garrick upon hearing the sad news. "And yet she was the greatest female plague belonging to my house. I could easily parry the artless thrusts and despise the coarse language of some of my other heroines; but whatever was Cibber's object, a new part or a new dress, she was always sure to carry her point by the acuteness of her invective and the steadiness of her perseverance."

Mrs. Cibber's most formidable rival in the love-lorn heroines of tragedy was GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY, and during the famous Romeo and Juliet contest, perhaps, the palm of victory rested as decidedly with the younger, more beautiful, and more impulsive actress, as it did with Barry. Her story is a most romantic one. She was the illegitimate daughter of Lord Tyrawley, by the wife of one Captain Bellamy, and was born in the year 1731. My lord acknowledged

her, and had her educated in a convent in Boulogne; there she remained until she was eight years old, after which she was brought home to his house and thrown into such male society as the old *roué* delighted in. By-and-by he was appointed Ambassador to Russia, and upon George Anne electing to live with her mother, he refused to make her any allowance and cast her destitute upon the world.

Through her mother, who had appeared on the stage for a short time, she made the acquaintance of Rich. One day the old manager accidentally overheard her, while in company with his daughters, deliver some speeches from "Othello," and was so struck by her powers that he proposed she should turn her attention to the stage. She was then just fourteen, very beautiful, graceful, and fascinating. After one or two private performances, in which Garrick took part, she was announced to appear upon the Covent Garden Stage as Monimia in the "Orphan." Quin was indignant at this mere child being cast for such a part. "It will not do, sir," growled the burly tyrant; and as Quin ruled the theatre, manager and all, it was considered that the fiat had gone forth; but, to everybody's surprise, Rich answered, "But it shall do, sir." None of the three principal gentlemen would appear at the rehearsal, but the manager, to console her for these snubs, bought her a magnificent dress to appear in. Quin and his followers prophesied dead failure; but

Rich, who had the most profound belief in his *protégée*, had spread about such extraordinary praises of her ability, and thereby so raised public curiosity, that on the night of her *début* the house was crammed with a most brilliant audience. In the first scene her confusion was so great that the curtain had to be dropped until she recovered. When she next appeared, nervousness rendered her voice inaudible. Quin was exultant; Rich was in despair, imploring her to rouse herself, and inciting his friends to encourage her by their applause. But it was not until the fourth act that she could shake off this paralysis of timidity. "Suddenly," she says, "to the astonishment of the audience, the surprise of the performers, and the exultation of the manager, I felt myself as it were inspired. I blazed out at once with meridian splendour, and I acquitted myself throughout the whole arduous part of the character, in which even many veterans have failed, with the greatest *éclat*." Quin changed from scorn to rapture. "Thou art a divine creature, and the true spirit is in thee!" he cried, lifting her off her feet in his transport. He was a friend and protector to her ever after.

That one night made her famous; she became the fashion. Ladies of quality patronised and petted her. Among her patrons was the celebrated and eccentric Duchess of Queensberry. She tells a capital story of her first introduction to her Grace.

A few days before her benefit, Miss Bellamy received a summons to present herself at Queensberry House by twelve o'clock next day. Arraying herself in her best, and hiring a chair, she arrived there at the appointed time ; but what was her mortification when, after taking up her name, the domestic returned to say that her Grace knew no such person. This, however, was much exceeded by her astonishment when she was informed that same evening that nearly every box in the house had been secured by the Duchess, and a note was given her from that lady, again requesting a visit on the following morning. This time, dreading a second mortification, she dressed very plainly, and walked. She was, however, at once ushered into her Grace's presence. " Well, young woman," was her salutation, " what business had you in a chair yesterday ? It was a fine morning, and you ought to have walked. You look as you ought to do now. Nothing is so vulgar as wearing silk in the morning. Simplicity best becomes youth, and you do not stand in need of ornaments ; therefore always dress plain, except when you are upon the stage." While she talked, she was cleaning a picture. Her visitor begged to be allowed to assist her. " Don't you think I've domestics enough, if I didn't choose to do it myself ?" was the sharp rejoinder. Then she drew a canvas bag out of her cabinet, and said, " There are two hundred and fifty guineas, and twenty for the Duke's tickets and mine :

but I must give you something for Tyrawley's sake." "She then took a bill from her pocket-book, which having put into my hands, she told me her coach was ordered to carry me home, lest any accident should happen to me now I had such a charge about me."

It need scarcely be said that the beautiful young actress was importuned by all the noble *roués* about town. But she tells us that she would not listen to any proposals, "but marriage and a coach." Among the most urgent of her suitors was Lord Byron, who, finding her deaf to all entreaties, resolved to resort to force. One Sunday evening a messenger came to her lodgings in Southampton Street to say that a young lady friend was waiting for her in a coach at the end of the street. Not staying to put on hat or gloves she ran to the coach, where she was seized, lifted in, and found herself beside a friend of my Lord's; he said that no harm was intended her if she would consent to make Lord Byron happy, who was about to be married to a young lady of large fortune, which would enable him to make a handsome provision for her. All this time the horses were galloping at full speed, until they stopped before a house at the corner of North Audley Street, about which, at this period, all was open country. The abductor, who was an Earl, carried her into the house, which was his own, and then went away to prepare, as he said, a lodging he had engaged for her in Carnaby Market. Now fol-

lows an extraordinary incident, which reads like a chapter out of an old novel. She had a half-brother, who had been abroad several years, and whose return was hourly expected; it so happened that he turned the corner of the street where she was lodging just as the coach was driving off. He had seen a young lady forced into it, but without recognising her. He ran to the rescue, but the horses soon outstripped him. On reaching the lodgings, and inquiring for his sister, he found everybody in a state of distraction. "Oh! fly, fly to her relief," cried one; "she has been run off with by Lord——." He at once proceeded to that nobleman's residence, and not finding him at home, walked up and down before the door, determined not to go away without seeing him. So that when my lord returned, he found himself confronted by a personage whom he little expected, and who insisted upon being conducted to Miss Bellamy's presence. There was no evading the request, and the young lady's surprise and delight may be imagined when she saw the Earl enter the room thus accompanied. But her pleasure was shortlived; believing her to be a willing party to the elopement, he repulsed her so violently that she fell to the ground in a swoon. When consciousness returned, she was told there had been a dreadful scene; her brother had inflicted manual chastisement upon the Earl, and then left the house, vowing he would never look upon her

face again. He at once started for Portsmouth, and so left her to her fate. Upon being taken to the lodging prepared for her, she discovered the mistress of the house to be a mantua-maker who worked for her, and to whom she told her story. "My appearance, as well as my eyes, which were much swelled with crying, was an undeniable testimony of the truth of my assertions." Her mother, who had now turned religious, proved as unbelieving and inexorable as her son, and the poor girl fell into a dangerous fever. We next hear of her residing with some Quaker relations in Essex, of a reconciliation with her mother, then of her engaging with Sheridan for Dublin, where she was very well received by Miss O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley's sister, who introduced her to all her fashionable friends as her niece. Her beauty, youth, and talents, together with the patronage of these noble personages, especially that of the Honourable Mrs. Butler, a lady of great consequence in the society of the Irish capital, at once secured her success.

The adulation and applause that everywhere greeted her, both before and behind the scenes, turned my young lady's head; and when Garrick, who was starring at the time in Dublin, refused to let her play Constance with him in "King John," on account of her youth, she was so indignant that she prevailed upon her patroness to inflict upon the great actor an unexpected humiliation. Mrs. Butler

gave large balls and parties, and possessed such influence in society, that she had only to send round and request her friends not to visit the theatre that evening, for Garrick, who had been hitherto playing to crowded houses, to perform to empty benches. The next time "King John" was represented, Miss Bellamy appeared as Constance, and more people were turned away than would have filled the house twice over. But not even this triumph could heal the wounded vanity of this Miss in her teens; and when Garrick fixed upon "Jane Shore" for his benefit, and solicited her to play the heroine, she absolutely refused, sarcastically alleging the objection he had offered against her playing Constance—her youth. David, always prudent where his interests were concerned, instead of resenting the affront, further flattered my young lady's vanity by writing her an entreating note, in which he promised that if she would oblige him he would write her "*a goody-goody* epilogue, which, with the help of your eyes, shall do more mischief than ever the flesh or the devil has done since the world began." He directed this note "To my Soul's Idol, the Beautified Ophelia," and gave it to his servant to deliver. The fellow, instead of doing so, handed it over to a porter in the street, without glancing at the address, which, he supposed, was the same as had been orally given him. The porter, upon reading the superscription, scratched his head. He knew the name

of every person of quality in the city, but no one entitled "My Soul's Idol, or the Beautified Ophelia." Thinking it was a joke, he passed the letter over to a newsman, who thereupon inserted it in one of the newspapers, to the intense amusement of the public.

But Garrick's humiliation and her own were amply avenged by Mrs. Furnival, the actress who had been dispossessed of the part of Constance by my young madam's arrogance. Miss Bellamy was to play Cleopatra, and Sheridan, the manager, had bought for her a very magnificent dress, worn by the Princess of Wales upon her birthday—not very appropriate, perhaps, to the Egyptian queen, but they were not archæological in those days. To add to its splendour, Mrs. Butler had lent her a number of diamonds. On the day of performance the dress was left in the dressing-room by her maid, while she went on some errand. Mrs. Furnival, who was to play Octavia, happening to pass by, caught sight of the splendid raiment, and, without a moment's hesitation, entered, carried it off to her own tiring-room, and proceeded to adapt it to her own figure. Great was the consternation of the careless servant upon her return to find the dress, with all the diamonds, gone. Being told it was in Mrs. Furnival's possession, she ran like a mad woman to her room, and demanded its return. It was coolly refused. Upon which, hot with rage, she fell tooth and nail upon the spoiler, whose screams speedily brought

assistance. But the spoil was retained, and when Miss Bellamy requested her to restore the jewels, the reply was, that she should have them after the play. Nor could threats or entreaties move her. And Octavia marched on a blaze of silver tissue and diamonds, while Cleopatra had to put up with the plain, dingy dress which had been intended for Antony's wife. Only a woman could have conceived such an exquisite revenge, or have had the effrontery to have carried it out.

Upon her return to England, she joined Rich at Covent Garden, again met her father, and a reconciliation took place. Unfortunately, however, he selected a husband for her of whom she did not approve, and finding him peremptory, she eloped one night from the theatre in the middle of the performance, in her stage dress, with a Mr. Metham, the man of her heart, who promised to marry her. But she soon discovered she had been duped, and that, on account of certain legal settlements, he could not make her his wife during his father's life. After a few months' absence she returned to the stage, to be again the great attraction, and to be still received in the society of ladies of rank and reputation. She continued to live with Metham for some time; but finding little chance of his fulfilling his promise, she listened to the addresses of a gentleman named Calcraft, an army contractor, who made the curious proposal of signing a bond to

make her his wife within six or seven years, on the forfeiture of fifty thousand pounds. The excuse he alleged for the delay was his dependence upon Mr. Fox, who forbade such a union—but that within the specified time he should be able to realise sufficient to be independent of him. After much and long persuasion she consented. “The contract was immediately executed; and except the omission of the ceremony, our nuptials were celebrated to the satisfaction of all parties, *but my poor self.*” By-and-by she discovered that the man was already married, and therefore could not keep his engagement. She published a statement, with an appeal to the public, and there was a great scandal. From this time her course was a downward one, over which it is best to draw a veil.

She and Woffington were rivals and deadly foes. Peggy, whatever might have been her errors, was a thoroughly trained actress, with a real devotion to her art, in which she worked hard. George Anne, although possessed of undoubted abilities, was never much more than a clever amateur; she had begun too high on the ladder; she had thought more of her dress, of her looks, than of her acting; she exercised her profession capriciously, and her heart was never in it, except in so far as it ministered to her vanity and extravagance, therefore there is little doubt that Woffington had something of scorn in her jealousy. Poor old Rich must have

ever been in hot water with their perpetual bickering and quarrelling. He had revived Lee's "Alexander the Great" for Barry, and the two ladies were, very appropriately, to appear as "The Rival Queens." Bellamy sent to Paris for the two most splendid dresses that could be bought. Rich purchased for Woffington a suit which had belonged to the Princess Dowager of Wales; it was quite new, looked beautiful by day, but being of a pale straw colour faded into a dirty white by candle-light. And, whether accidentally or purposely, Bellamy had chosen a bright yellow, over which she wore a purple robe. The contrast was terrible. As soon as Woffington saw her, almost bursting with rage, she, with a haughty air, addressed her thus: "I desire, madam, you will never more, upon any account, wear those clothes in the piece we perform to-night." Bellamy promised not to do so, but, with artful malice, the next night she donned dress No. 2, which was more splendid than the former. This so kindled Mrs. Woffington's rage that it nearly bordered on madness; she drove her off the stage, and gave her the *coup de grâce* almost in sight of the audience. The night after the yellow and purple was again worn, and Woffington all in a fury demanded "how she dared to dress again in the manner that she had so strictly prohibited?" Rich was sent for and wisely declined to come. Upon which there were mutual recriminations.

Roxana thrust home when she said, "It was well for her that she had a minister to supply her extravagance with jewels and such paraphernalia." To which Statira retorted, "that she was sorry that even half the town could not furnish a supply equal to the minister she so illiberally hinted at." Upon which Woffington's fury was so great, that her rival took to her heels and fled, "frighted at the sound herself had made," but was even then only saved from a terrible mauling by the interposition of the Comte de Haslang, who was in the green-room at the time. Such adventures may seem very shocking to the overstrained refinement of the present day; but such behaviour was not confined to actresses, being frequently indulged in by ladies of title. Foote getting hold of the quarrel produced a piece entitled "The Green-room Squabble; or a Battle Royal between the Queen of Babylon and the Daughter of Darius."

In her best days, Miss Bellamy disputed the empire of the stage not only with Woffington, but with Mrs. Cibber herself. In the delineation of all-absorbing passionate love she had no equal. Her Juliet was perfection. Of her Belvidera, a fine judge said, "I came to admire Garrick; I go away enchanted with Bellamy." Her surpassing beauty, her soft blue eyes, her exquisite fairness, rendered her a very goddess of love; while in brilliancy of wit and powers of conversation she was even Woffington's rival. Wealth was poured upon her

in a Danaë shower, and scattered as recklessly as it was showered ; but not all wasted, for her charities were munificent. She gave £1,000 towards better clothing our soldiers in the war, and as she passed through the Park every sentinel saluted her.

But she could not long escape the consequences of such a life. Giving herself up to pleasure she began to neglect her profession, and became so careless and capricious that the public would no longer tolerate her, managers would not engage her, and Colman offered her six pounds a week. At length, in 1760, Mossop, in remembrance of the former rage she had created in Dublin, offered her £1,000 for the season. Years had elapsed since that memorable first visit ; the remembrance of her beauty and talent was still fresh in the minds of her old admirers, and their talk and anticipations stimulated the rising generation with an eager curiosity to behold this paragon ; so that when she arrived at her lodgings she found a crowd collected about the door to see her alight. But, alas ! though only nine-and-twenty, the once enchanting loveliness was faded, and the crowd saw only “ a little dirty creature, bent nearly double, enfeebled by fatigue, her countenance tinged with jaundice, and in every respect the reverse of a person who could make the least pretension to beauty.” The description is her own. Tate Wilkinson describes her reception upon the stage.

“ Mossop, as manager, made his first appearance in *Pierre*, in ‘*Venice Preserved*,’ Belvidera, Mrs. Bellamy, being the first night of her performing. Expectation was so great that the house filled as fast as the people could thrust in with or without paying. On speaking her first line before the scenes—‘Lead me, ye virgins, lead me to that kind voice’—it struck the ears of the audience as uncouth and unmusical; yet she was received, as was prepared and determined by all who were her or Mr. Mossop’s friends, and by the public at large, with repeated plaudits on her *entrée*. But the roses were fled! The young, the once lovely Bellamy, was turned haggard! and her eyes, that used to charm all hearts, appeared sunk, large, hollow, and ghastly. O Time! Time! thy glass should be often consulted; for before the first short scene had elapsed, disappointment, chagrin, and pity sat on every eye and countenance. By the end of the third act, they were all (like Bobadil) planet-struck; the other two acts were hobbled through. Mossop was cut to the heart, and never played *Pierre* (one of his best parts) so indifferently as on that night. The curtain dropped, and poor Bellamy never after drew a single house there. She left Dublin without a single friend to regret her loss. And as an actress of note, her name never more ranked in any theatre, nor did she ever again rise in public estimation.”

Although in the receipt of fifty guineas a week,

she was arrested for debt long before the termination of her engagement. Upon her return to London this was a frequent occurrence. At length, to avoid writs, she engaged herself as housekeeper to the Comte de Haslang, who, being an ambassador, secured to all his household immunity from arrest. Her downward course was now fast and furious; one after another went diamonds, clothes, all she possessed; then she borrowed small sums of money from every person who would lend to her, lived within the rules of the King's Bench, and was only deterred one night from casting herself off Westminster Bridge by overhearing the complaints of a creature even more miserable than herself.

In 1785 a benefit was organised for her at Covent Garden. Reynolds, the dramatist, thus describes the sad scene: "I dwell for a moment on a last appearance which I witnessed, namely, that of Mrs. Bellamy, who took her leave of the stage May 24, 1785. On this occasion Miss Farren, the present Countess of Derby, spoke an address which concluded with the following couplet:

" ' But see, oppress'd with gratitude and tears,
To pay her duteous tribute, she appears.' "

The curtain then ascended, and Mrs. Bellamy being discovered, the whole house immediately arose to mark their favourable inclinations towards her, and from anxiety to obtain a view of this once celebrated

actress, and, in consequence of the publication of her life, then celebrated authoress. She was seated in an arm-chair, from which she in vain attempted to rise, so completely was she subdued by her feelings. She, however, succeeded in muttering a few words expressive of her gratitude, and then, sinking into her seat, the curtain dropped before her—for ever!" She died in 1788.

One of the greatest actresses of this period was MRS. BARRY. Her maiden name was Street, and she was the daughter of a Bath apothecary. While on a visit in the North, to which she had been sent on account of a love disappointment, she made the acquaintance of Dancer, an actor, and being stage-struck, became his wife. Natural talents were assisted by a fine figure and a beautiful face. But her parents were so indignant at her choice that they commenced a regular persecution of the young people, wrote to the magistrates of every town they entered, and had them driven out, until they were obliged to leave the country. They went over to Dublin and joined Barry's company. Soon afterwards Dancer died. There was an Irish earl madly in love with the beautiful young widow, but he of the silver tongue loved her also, and carried her off from his aristocratic rival. When Barry returned to London he brought her, now Mrs. Barry, with him. She made her *début* at the Haymarket under Foote, in 1766. Garrick was in

front, recognised her powers, engaged her, and from that time she took her place beside the greatest actresses of the age.

“I have seen her,” writes a critic, “as Cordelia, in ‘King Lear,’ raising to Heaven her large eyes glistening with tears; and then, speechless and wringing her hands, as it seemed to me with the aureole of a saint round her head, flinging herself into her father’s arms. It is the grandest thing of the kind I have ever seen an actress do; my fancy still feeds on it, and the recollection of it will go with me to my grave.” At this time she was nearly forty years of age.

“Who like her,” wrote a critic in the *Morning Chronicle* (1782), “ever possessed the power of melting an audience into tears, or of chilling them with horror, or of dissolving them in tenderness, or inflaming them with all the transports of rage and fury? Of, in short, modelling their hearts to the passions she means to represent; she is happy beyond any other woman in the dumb expression of passion labouring within.” Her comedy was equally admirable: and Taylor considered her Rosalind to have been the most perfect representation of the part he had ever witnessed; while her Beatrice was as full of life and spirit as her Belvidera was overwhelmingly pathetic. She used to say she played tragedy to please the town, comedy to please herself.

Two years after Barry's death she married a wild young Irish barrister, named Crawford, who ran through all her fortune, and then, under her tuition, became a respectable actor and started in management in Dublin. His spendthrift habits, however, forbade a commercial success; salaries were unpaid, and everything fell into confusion. One night when "Hamlet" was to be performed, he had to appear before the audience, dressed for the part, to apologise for the absence of the orchestra, the musicians having struck for their salaries. There was a murmur of discontent, and the spectators did not seem disposed to accept his excuses, when a voice from the gallery shouted out, "Divil burn it, Billy Crawford, don't I know you play the fiddle like an angel; tip us a tune yourself, darlin', and that shall content us!" So nothing remained to Crawford but to fetch his violin, come back to the footlights, and strike up "Paddy O'Rafferty," the lively strains of which so warmed his Irish blood that the representative of the Danish Prince began to bob his head and fling up his heels to the time, threatening every moment to break into a jig. The strain finished, Crawford retired, amidst enthusiastic applause, to compose himself for the tragedy.

Mrs. Crawford continued to be unrivalled in her great parts until Mrs. Siddons' wonderful success swept all rivalry before her. Nothing daunted, however, the elder actress entered the lists against

her in Lady Randolph, one of her finest characters, and the public flocked eagerly to renew old impressions and confirm doubtful judgments. Mrs. Crawford was of the Garrick school, and her method was entirely different to that of the Siddons; she reserved herself for bursts of passion, while the other equally elaborated every line. Mrs. Crawford far surpassed her in vehemence of feeling. "Her voice," says Boaden, "was like a flaming arrow—it was the lightning of passion. Such was the effect of her almost shriek to Old Norval, 'Was he alive?' It was an electric shock that drove the blood back to the heart, and made you cold, and shudder with terror in the midst of a crowded theatre." "If," says another critic, "her flights were higher, Siddons was longer upon the wing; if with her the blaze was brighter, with Siddons it was more constant; the one often surpassed expectation, the other never fell below it. Mrs. Siddons was pre-eminent in the dignified, the vehement, the maternal, and the intellectual; Mrs. Crawford in the tender, the confiding, the impassioned." From which remarks I think we may gather that Mrs. Crawford's was the finer genius of the two, and, had there not been such a disparity of years, it would have won for her a decided victory over her more correct but colder rival. But Mrs. Crawford was an old woman, who had grown coarse and ugly with years, the other was in the prime of

her beauty ; no genius could render the contest equal. For her benefit the elder actress was so foolish as to announce herself in Mrs Siddons' greatest part, *Isabella*. But the boxes were not taken, and she fell ill of the disappointment. Her last appearance upon the stage was as *Lady Randolph*, at *Covent Garden*, in 1798. She died in 1801. Notwithstanding all the vicissitudes which followed upon her third marriage, the latter years of her life were passed in prosperous comfort.

MRS. YATES, another tragic actress celebrated for her beauty, although not equal to those just mentioned, was admirable in declamatory characters, such as *Medea*, which not even Mrs. Siddons cared to play after her. She was rather of the French than the English school, cold and correct. There is a story told of her acting in *Constance* which gives us a vivid idea of her style. At the lines :

" I will not keep this form upon my head,
When there is such disorder in my wit ;"

she should cast her head-dress upon the ground, instead of which Mrs. Yates carefully hung it to her hoop. Grandeur and majesty were the finest attributes of her acting. *Violante* in "*The Wonder*," was her only successful comedy part. She made her first appearance at *Drury Lane* in 1754, but her abilities were little esteemed, until she was called upon to play *Mandane* (*Orphan of*

China) in consequence of Mrs. Cibber's illness. Her last appearance was for Mrs. Bellamy's benefit. She died two years afterwards, in 1787.

MISS YOUNGE, although scarcely to be placed on a level with such superlative actresses as Pritchard, Cibber, and Barry, was an artist of fine powers, and might have succeeded to the throne they vacated but for the advent of Siddons. She was equally good in tragedy and comedy. Boaden says, "she could play Queen Katherine well, but not equal to Mrs. Siddons; Beatrice excellently, although not equal to Mrs. Abington;" which remark implies she was good in all, great in none. She made her first appearance at Drury Lane, in 1768; became the wife of Pope, a respectable tragic-actor, and retired in 1797.

She was Garrick's last Cordelia. When the curtain fell upon "King Lear," the night before his farewell, he assisted her to rise, and, holding her hand in his, walked silently towards her dressing-room. He stopped at the door, and, turning to her, said sadly: "Ah, Bessie, this is the last time I shall be your father." Still under the influence of the sublime scenes they had been playing together, and impressed by the solemn melancholy of the great actor's manner, she raised her tearful eyes, knelt down at his feet, and asked him to give her a father's blessing. It was a spontaneous impulse, and both the actors in this touching scene were fully in earnest.

CHAPTER X.

THE COMEDY LADIES.

Peg Woffington—Her First Introduction to the Profession—
Another Cinderella—An Interview with Rich—A London Success
—Her Amour with Garrick—President of the Beef-Steak Club
—Defying an Audience—Her Powers as an Actress—Aristo-
cratic Connections—A Melancholy Last Scene—Kitty Clive—
As Nell in "The Devil to Pay"—Her Marriage—Her Jealousy
of Garrick—Her Penchant for Tragedy—The Disadvantages of
Corpulence—Mrs. Abington—Her Early Life—A Leader of
Fashion—Her Incomparable Comedy Acting—Miss Pope.

THE ladies of his theatre were the plagues of
Garrick's life. Woffington and Cibber were the
torments of his earlier years; Younge, Abington,
and Yates, of his later.

"Three thousand wives kill'd Orpheus in a rage,
Three actresses drove Garrick from the stage,"

wrote an anonymous rhymester. While another
thus ridiculed their affectations:—

" 'I have no nerves,' says Y—g, 'I cannot act.'
'I've lost my limbs,' cries A—n, ' 'tis fact.
Y—s screams, 'I've lost my voice, my throat's so sore,'
Garrick declares he'll play the fool no more."

First let us take a glance at charming Peggy. "Forgive her one female error," says a biographer, "and it might fairly be said of her that she was adorned with every virtue; honour, truth, benevolence, charity were her distinguishing qualities." Such might have been written of many another actress upon whom untempted prudery, who can boast no other virtue, looks down with scorn. "Truth, honour, benevolence, charity"—surely they ought to weigh something against the one female fault. Poor Margaret must indeed have been a veritable angel—or a petrification, if she had been one of the unscathed ones. Her origin was of the meanest. She was born in Dublin in 1718; her father, a poor bricklayer, died when she was only a few years old; her mother took in washing as the only means of supporting her two little girls. "I have met with more than one in Dublin," says Lee Lewes in his *Memoirs*, "who assured me that they remembered the lovely Peggy, with a little dish upon her hand, and without shoes to cover her delicate feet, crying through College Green, and Dame Street, and other parts of that end of the town: 'All this fine young salad for a halfpenny; all for a halfpenny here!'" The little creature's frequent visits to the College in the way of her profession, her early wit, and the sweet features she was blessed with, recommended her to the notice of many generous young students of the University,

who were even then, when she was scarcely nine years old, lavish in their praises of her wit and beauty." Later on, Peggy assisted her mother at the wash-tub, and used to fetch the water from the Liffey. Dirt, however, could not disfigure her dark, brilliant eyes, her exquisitely pencilled eyebrows, the nobility and expressiveness of which was one of the distinguishing traits of her face; or her finely chiselled aquiline nose, although it doubtless obscured the beauty of her complexion; nor could rags mar the singular grace of her figure. There were others who marked these attractions besides the College students, among them one Madame Violante, well known at the time as a rope-dancer, who had a booth in George's Lane, now Great George Street, and who stopped her one day as she was going along with her pail upon her head, and asked her how she would like to learn to dance and wear fine dresses. Peggy's answer need not be recorded; Madame accompanied her home, and there and then prevailed upon the mother to let her take the child as an apprentice. So Peggy left salad-crying and water-bearing, and went away to the booth, where she learned to dance and speak French admirably.

By-and-by Madame Violante added acting to the attractions of her establishment, and trained a company of children to play "The Beggar's Opera." Woffington was the Polly, and, although only

twelve years of age, acted and sang so charmingly, that she became not only the bright, particular star of the troupe, drawing crowds to the humble booth, but the talk of Dublin. Her next part was Nell in "The Devil to Pay," in which her success was even greater.

Some persons of consequence, who had seen her act, by-and-by prevailed upon Elrington, the manager of the Theatre Royal, to engage this youthful prodigy, and at thirteen she appeared as Polly Peachem upon the legitimate boards, with a success as great as she had achieved beneath the rope-dancer's canvas. What a change! Who could have recognised the little ragged salad-girl in the beautiful, elegantly dressed, bewitching actress, who was already turning all the male heads in Dublin? There she remained, playing the round both of tragic and comic characters, the Jane Shores, Monimias, Sylvias, Estifanias, Lady Townleys, with ever-increasing popularity, until she was twenty-two. Then, desirous of triumphs in a yet more brilliant arena, she came to London, and sought an interview with Rich, the Covent Garden manager. Nineteen times did she call, and the answer was "engaged." On the twentieth, it occurred to her for the first time to send up her name, and she was immediately admitted.

She found the eccentric father of pantomimes lolling upon a sofa, a play-book in one hand, a

cup of tea in the other, while around him were seven-and-twenty cats of different sizes, from the kitten who could just lap, to the grave and toothless Tom, the father of countless generations. Some were playing, some sat staring at him, one was eating toast out of his mouth, another was licking the milk out of his saucer, one was perched upon his shoulder, another upon his arm, a third upon his knee, a fourth upon his head. Woffington's fame had long since travelled across the Channel, and Rich at once engaged her at nine pounds a week.

She made her appearance at Covent Garden in the October of 1740, as Sylvia in "The Recruiting Officer," and a little later in that part with which her name is inextricably associated, Sir Harry Wildair, in Farquhar's "Constant Couple." In this she took the town by storm. The author had said that the part died with Wilks, it was a pity he did not live to see its glorious resurrection in Woffington. Such fire, such dash, such devilry, some people could not believe it was a woman. One young lady believing her to be really a man, fell in love with her, and sent her a proposal of marriage. Night after night all London rushed to applaud and to worship.

It was at this time that Garrick was dangling about the side scenes of the patent theatres, dying to act, and eagerly seeking the acquaintance of every actor and actress of celebrity. Enraptured

with lovely Peggy, he was quickly added to the list of her adorers. He did not plead in vain. In the first year of his engagement at Drury Lane, he and Woffington kept house together in Bow Street. But, as we have seen in a previous chapter ("David Garrick"), the lady was too lavish in her habits to please her careful lover. Such a venial fault, however, might have been pardoned, had there not been the graver one of infidelity behind. But all the rakes, wits, and fine gentlemen of the town were besieging the weak fortress. At length, one morning, at breakfast, Garrick told her it would be better for both that they should part. "I have been wearing the shirt of Dejanira," he said. "Then throw it off at once," retorted the lady, in that shrill harsh voice which was her great defect. "From this moment I have done with you." She returned all his presents, and required him to make a like restitution. He, however, kept back a pair of diamond shoe-buckles as a souvenir—his enemies insinuated on account of their value. It has been said that Garrick seriously entertained an idea of reforming this fair frailty and marrying her; indeed, that he had gone so far as to buy the ring and try it on. It was, perhaps, fortunate for both parties that the *amour* ended as it did.

She frequently visited Dublin in the London vacations. In 1751, in ten performances of four favourite parts, she drew £4,000. Connected with

the theatre was a Beef Steak Club, which, like its English namesake, was composed of some of the most distinguished personages of the Irish capital. Ladies, of course, were not admitted; but the rule was broken in favour of the bewitching Peggy, who was unanimously elected President for the season. It may be safely averred that the Beef Steaks had never had so delightful a chairman—that such wit, and mirth, and sparkling retort had never circulated their table before. But it must not be supposed that it was only by rakes and fine gentlemen that her society was relished. The poor little Irish street-girl had cultivated her natural abilities by reading and accomplishments, and men the most eminent for learning, and of the gravest habits, sought her conversation, and were charmed by it. “Our old Actresses,” unlike certain of their descendants of the present day, had something more to recommend them to popular favour than a shapely leg and a brazen face; these, even combined with the most pliant disposition, would have failed to secure the suffrages of the most abandoned men; and an actress, who, destitute of abilities and accomplishments, had dared to trust to lewdness alone for popularity, would have been hooted from the stage, even if she had escaped with so light a punishment. So much for our boasted advance in morality and refinement. The vices of our forefathers were the outcome of hot blood, high spirits, and exuberant

energy; those of our day are born of dyspeptic senility and morbid cynicism, the warnings of a civilization fast hastening to decay.

But all the adulation by which she was surrounded never turned Margaret Woffington's head; her love of pleasure never made her forgetful of her duties to the public as an actress. She, unlike too many other spoiled darlings, never wantonly disappointed her audience, and would rise from a sick bed to keep faith with them. Her good-nature was frequently made the victim of others' caprices; and when Quin and Barry, or Mrs. Cibber took a fit of jealous sulks, and pleaded indisposition, Woffington was invariably called upon to come to the rescue of the manager in one of her popular parts. At length she grew tired of being made a stop-gap, and declared she would no longer respond to these sudden announcements; and she kept her word. One night Mrs. Cibber declined to act on the old plea; Woffington was announced, and refused to appear. The next night the audience greeted her with a shower of hisses. Darting lightning upon them from her magnificent eyes she retired, and was only after great persuasion induced to go on again. Calmly advancing to the front, but with a look of defiant scorn, she said that she was quite willing to perform her part, but "which is it to be—on or off? It is for you to decide; to me it is a matter of indifference." This bold speech had the desired effect. "On, on,"

was the reply, accompanied by a tremendous round of applause.

Woffington was a true artiste, who could on occasions sacrifice personal feelings to the general interests of the theatre. Although in possession of the first line of characters, she frequently appeared in inferior rôles (even to her rival, Mrs. Cibber) to strengthen the castes. She would play for the benefit of the humblest performer ; and, says a contemporary, "She ever remained the same gay, affable, obliging, good-natured Peggy to all around her."

"Her chief merits in acting, I think," says Davies, in his *Life of Garrick*, "consisted in her representation of females of high rank, and of dignified elegance, whose grace in deportment as well as foibles, she understood and played in a very pleasing manner." "She only required a fine voice," remarks another, "to have excelled all the women in the world in amorous tragedy." She paid a visit to Paris to study French acting, more especially that of Dumesnil, who held a position analogous to her own. The parts of high comedy, such as *Sylvia*, *Lady Townley*, *Lady Betty Modish*, *Sir Harry Wildair*, were her great successes ; but she was also excellent as *Jane Shore*, *Hermione*, *Isabella*, *Monimia* ; in tragedy, however, her bad voice was much against her. Her fine-figure and dashing style, which so admirably fitted her for what are techni-

cally called "the breeches parts," once induced her to essay Lothario in "The Fair Penitent," but the tragedy rake did not suit her so well as the comedy.

Her family shared in her prosperity, and old Mrs. Woffington was to be seen about Dublin in her velvet cloak, diamond ring, and with her agate snuff-box in her hand, expatiating upon her Peggy's greatness and goodness. Her younger sister, Polly, she had sent to France to be educated, and a very charming and accomplished young lady she grew up, little inferior to her famous sister; she captivated the nephew of Lord Cholmondeley, and he married her. My Lord was terribly disgusted at first, but, upon being introduced to Margaret, he told that syren that *she* had reconciled him to the match. "My Lord," she answered coldly, and not at all dazzled by the compliment, "I have much more reason to be offended with it than you, for before I had but one beggar to maintain, now I have two."

The children of this pair married into the families of Townshend and Bellingham, who are thus, like so many other noble houses, connected by blood ties with a celebrated actress.

Her career was but a short one, and its end was a sad contrast to its early brilliancy. Before she was forty her health began to fail: the final break-up was strangely dramatic. It must be described in the words of an eye-witness, Tate Wilkinson.

“Monday, May 17, 1757. ‘As You Like It’ was acted at Covent Garden. I was standing at the wing as Mrs. Woffington in Rosalind, and Mrs. Vincent in Celia, were going on the stage in the first act. . . . She went through Rosalind for four acts without my perceiving she was in the least disordered, but in the fifth she complained of great indisposition. I offered her my arm, the which she graciously accepted. I thought she looked softened in her behaviour and had less of the *hauteur*. When she came off, at the quick change of dress, she again complained of being ill ; but she got accoutred and returned to finish the part. When in the epilogue she arrived at, ‘If I were among you I would kiss as many as had beards that pleased me,’ her voice broke, she faltered, endeavoured to groan, but could not, then in a voice of tremor screamed ‘Oh God ! oh God !’ tottered to the stage door speechless, where she was caught. The audience of course applauded until she was out of sight, and then sank into awful looks of astonishment, both young and old, before and behind the curtain, to see one of the most handsome women of the age, a favourite principal actress, and who had for several seasons given high entertainment, struck so suddenly by the hand of death, in such a situation of time and place, and in her prime of life, being then about forty-four. She was given over that night, and for several days, yet so far recovered

as to linger till near the year 1760, but existed as a mere skeleton, 'sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.'"

Looking upon her portrait for the first time is a surprise, it is so different to what our preconceived notions are likely to be. The beautiful face is pale, demure, placid, and even cold in expression; the hair is unpowdered and drawn behind the ears with a little cap, similar to that now worn by servant maids, set on the back of the head.

One of the greatest comic geniuses that ever adorned the stage, was CATHERINE CLIVE, born in 1711; she was the daughter of an Irish gentleman, who, after ruining himself in the service of James II., accepted a commission under Louis XIV., but, having obtained a pardon, returned to England, and married the daughter of a London citizen, of which marriage Catherine was one of the issue. When quite a girl, she used to sing so pleasantly and spiritedly, that some friends suggested the stage, and gave her an introduction to Colley Cibber, who engaged her at a small salary. Her first appearance as an actress was in 1728, as a page in the tragedy of "Mithridates," in which she introduced a song, that was received with great applause. In the same season, she was so successful as Phillida in Cibber's "Love in a Riddle," which party prejudice had determined to condemn, that the audience ceased their riotous clamour whenever she was upon the stage. But it

was not until 1731, that her full powers were brought to light. It was in that year Coffey's still well-known farce of "The Devil to Pay" was first produced, and it was as Nell, a part which was once a *chef-d'œuvre* with all actresses of coarse comedy, that she astonished the town with such a display of comic genius as had never been witnessed perhaps before, and certainly never since.

In 1732, she married the brother of Baron Clive, but they could not agree, and soon separated. Yet throughout her life not even the finger of scandal was ever pointed at her. Fielding, in his dedication to "The Intriguing Chambermaid," tells how she supported her aged father, and calls her the best wife, the best daughter, the best sister, and the best friend. But she had a temper. Wilkinson says: "She was the terror of poets, managers, actors, actresses, and musicians—oh, rare Kitty!" "Madam," said Garrick to her one day, "I have heard of tartar and brimstone, but you are the cream of the one, and the flower of the other." She was passionate, cross, vulgar, but her heart was always open to the unfortunate, and she would supply their wants without pride and ostentation.

She and Garrick were always at loggerheads. She was eminent on the London stage before he appeared, and she never forgave him eclipsing her, as he did all others. One night, when he was performing King Lear, she came to the side scenes, to

carp at his acting, but was so deeply affected, that she sobbed one minute, and abused herself the next, and, at length, entirely overcome, she hurried away, exclaiming splenetically: "D—n him! I believe he could act a gridiron."* She was at times maliciously spiteful to him; when he entered the green-room dressed for Barbarossa, in a glittering silver tissue shape, she called out: "Make room for the royal lamplighter!" which jest disconcerted him for the remainder of the night, as she was perfectly aware it would. Yet, when she had quitted the stage, and all rivalry had ceased between them, her good heart did full justice to his merits, and no one was louder in praise of him.

"In the height of the public admiration for you," she wrote to him, "when you were never mentioned but as the Garrick, the charming man, the fine fellow, the delightful creature, both by men and ladies; when they were admiring everything you did and everything you scribbled, at this very time, I, *the Pivy*,† was a living witness that they did not know, nor could they be sensible, of half your perfections. I have seen you, with your magic hammer in your hand, endeavouring to beat your ideas into

* What stronger proofs of Garrick's superlative genius could be afforded than by such unwilling testimonies? than by the answer of his enemy Murphy to the question, as to what he was like? "In private life he was a mean, contemptible little fellow, but on the stage, great God!"

† A pet name Garrick used to call her by.

the heads of creatures who had none of their own. I have seen you, with lamb-like patience, endeavouring to make them comprehend you, and I have seen, when that could not be done, I have seen your lamb turned into a lion ; by this, your great labour and pains, the public was entertained ; *they* thought they all acted very fine, but they did not see you pull the wires. . . . There are people now on the stage to whom you gave their consequence ; they thought themselves very great ; now let them go on in their new parts, without your leading-strings, and they will soon convince the world what their genius is. I have always said this to every lady, even when your horses and mine were in their highest prancing. While I was under your controul, I did not say half the fine things I thought of you, because it looked like flattery, and you know your Pivy was always proud ; besides I thought you did not like me then, but now I am sure you do, which makes me send you this letter."

"Her comic abilities," writes Davies, "have not been excelled, nor indeed scarcely equalled, by any performer, male or female, these fifty years. What Colley Cibber said of Nokes was equally applicable to her, for like him she had such a fund of comic force about her that she had little more to do than to perfect herself in the words of a part, and leave the rest to nature. Her characters ranged from high-bred ladies to vulgar Mrs. Heidelberg,

and included country girls, romps, hoydens, dowdies, and viragos. To a strong and melodious voice, she added all the sprightliness requisite to a number of parts in ballad farces. Her mirth was so genuine, that whether it was restrained to the arch sense and the suppressed half laugh, widened to a broad grin, or extended to the downright honest burst of loud laughter, the audience were sure to accompany her. Happy was the author who could write a part equal to her abilities! She not only, in general, exceeded the writer's expectations, but all that the most enlightened spectator could conceive. I should as soon expect to see another Butler, Rabelais, or Swift, as another Clive." Like most comic geniuses, however, her penchant was for tragedy, and with a face and figure most unsuitable would play Zara, Portia, even Ophelia. "The applause she received in Portia," says the "Dramatic Censor," "was disgraceful both to herself and the audience." She murdered the blank verse with a harsh, dissonant voice, and always turned the last scene into burlesque by mimicking some famous lawyer of the day. Much of her spite against Garrick was probably due to his objecting to her making herself absurd in such unsuitable characters.

She made her last appearance in 1769, as Flora in "The Wonder," and the Fine Lady in "Lethe," an epilogue was written for her on the occasion by

Horace Walpole. Garrick made several overtures to induce her to change her mind, but she received them very rudely, peremptorily refusing. "I hate hypocrisy," she said, "for I am sure you would light up candles with joy at my leaving but for the expense." She loved to thrust herself into his plays and try to excel him, but he would seldom play with her; the mere knowledge of such a feeling would disturb so sensitive a nature as his and embarrass his powers. This was doubtless the reason he did not cast her Estifania and other parts which would have admirably suited her, and not, as she was accustomed to say, the dread lest she should get the better of him, at least not in the sense she meant. Upon leaving the stage she retired to Twickenham, where she was the near neighbour of Horace Walpole, and even that superfine snob deigned to acknowledge that he was pleased with her society. She died in 1785.

Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Pritchard became very corpulent in the last years of their career. One night they were performing the characters of Lady Easy and Edging, in "The Careless Husband." In the part where the former desires the latter to take up a letter, which is dropped on the stage, Mrs. Clive (who could as well have taken up the monument) cried out, "Not I, indeed! take it up yourself, if you like it." This threw an equal embarrassment on the other; which the audience seeing began to

titter. At last Mrs. Pritchard, with great presence of mind, replied, "Well, Madame Pert, since you won't take up the letter, I must get one that will," and rang for an attendant to do what neither could do for herself.

A scarcely less famous name even than Clive is that of MRS. ABINGTON, the original Lady Teazle. Gainsborough's charming picture has made that saucy, piquant face familiar to every person who looks into a printseller's windows. A strange romance might be woven out of her chequered career without deviating in the slightest from the reality. Her father, who had once been a soldier, was a cobbler, or something of the kind, in Vinegar Yard, where Fanny Barton was born about 1737. At first she sold flowers in the streets; then, having in some way acquired the taste, recited in taverns. Frequently of an evening, the waiter at the Bedford would ask the company if they would like to hear a clever little girl recite passages from Shakespeare. If permission was granted, she would be brought in, and stood upon the table, and when she had finished a few pence would be collected for her. At one time, she seems to have been in the service of a French milliner, where she acquired some knowledge of the French language. But her ordinary life was one of squalor, misery—and worse. During Theophilus Cibber's short career, at the Haymarket, in 1755, we find Miss Barton announced for *Miranda*,

in "The Busy Body," "being her first essay," the playbill says ; she played several other parts, Desdemona, and Sylvia, in "The Recruiting Officer," among the number. Next year she was engaged at Drury Lane, where she remained three seasons almost unrecognised ; for what chance of good parts had a novice in such a galaxy of great actresses as then adorned that stage ? In 1759, she married a musician of the orchestra, named Abington. But in a little time they separated by mutual consent. In 1760, she made her appearance at Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin. Here her success was immediate and assured ; she delighted the viceregal city as Kitty in "High Life Below Stairs," and drew crowded houses to see her Lady Townley. By this time, goodness knows how, the poor little waif of Vinegar Yard had developed into an educated and accomplished woman, who could converse fluently in French and Italian, with a taste so exquisite that she was the accepted leader of fashion, and the Abington Cap became all the rage among the Irish ladies. Five years she remained the darling of Dublin, then, Clive and Pritchard having retired, she yielded to Garrick's repeated invitations, and returned to Drury Lane.

She brought thither her Irish prestige and fame ; her dress, her style, her very walk were copied, her every movement upon the stage, so replete with grace, was watched by every female eye, with des-

pairing envy and admiration. Ladies of the first fashion consulted her upon their dress, not from mere caprice, but from a decided conviction that her judgment was perfect in blending the beautiful and the becoming. She was not handsome, as we may perceive by her portraits; her complexion was pale—and she never painted—her features irregular, with *le nez retroussé*. But her figure was particularly elegant, her eye bright and sparkling, and every feature was full of vivacity. She was on the stage thirty years, but it was said of her that she was twenty-one when she came upon it, and twenty-one when she left it.

Of all Garrick's female plagues, she was the greatest. Recriminatory letters were constantly passing between them; she several times sent in her resignation, but knew her value too well to believe it would be accepted. Perhaps he never wrote of any person such bitter words as these: "That most worthless creature, Abington, she is below the thoughts of any honest man; she is as silly as she is false and treacherous."* From 1782 to 1790 she played at Covent Garden, then quitted the stage for seven years. When she returned to it, her figure had lost much of its grace in

* Yet when the passions and spleens of the moment had passed away, she could add another testimony to his greatness. "Shakespeare," she said, "was made for Garrick, and Garrick for Shakespeare."

a more matronly appearance. She took no formal leave of her profession, but her last appearance was in the closing year of the century, when she played Lady Racket in "Three Weeks after Marriage," for Miss Pope's benefit. Yielding to the fashionable vice of the time, she had gambled away a large portion of her earnings, but passed her latter years in comfort and respect. Taylor tells us how he saw this once fascinating leader of fashion, in her old age, attired in a red cloak, and looking very like an inferior tradesman's wife. She died in 1815, and is buried in St. James's, Piccadilly.

Boaden says that she was the most brilliant satirist of her sex; that in her Beatrice there was more *enjouement* than in any other he had ever seen; that she saw nature through a highly-refined medium, and never condescended to be vulgar. Walpole considered her not only equal to any actress he had ever seen, but to all likely to succeed her. Her repertory was a wide one: she played Miss Hoyden and Desdemona, Ophelia and Olivia, Polly Peachem and Portia, Mrs. Termagant and Lydia Languish. But the part in which she is chiefly remembered is Lady Teazle. She and King must have acted marvellously together; Boaden said they were so suited to each other, that they lost half their soul in separation. In her rendering of the character, however, she gave no hints of the lady's rustic breeding, but was the fine lady throughout, in which Mrs. Jordan differed

from her in conception, as have many actresses since. "So various and unlimited are her talents," said Davies, "that she is not confined to females of a superior class; she can descend occasionally to the country girl, the romp, the hoyden, and the chamber-maid, and put on their various airs, humours, and whimsical under-parts; she thinks nothing low that is nature: nothing mean or beneath her skill which is characteristic."

MISS. POPE was Clive's legitimate successor in broad comedy, and transmitted to a later generation much of that fine actress's style and excellence. She was Kitty's protégée, and was favoured with her counsel and instruction. She played as a child with Garrick, and her name occurs in the Drury Lane play-bills as early as 1757, in the original caste of his farce of "Lilliput." In 1759, we find her playing Corinna in "The Confederacy," in which, although little more than fourteen years of age, she received so much applause, that her good friend Clive considered it necessary to warn her against being too much elated by approbation that was rather rendered to her youth than to her abilities. She was the original Mrs. Candour. She did not take leave of the stage until 1808. Her career thus extended over half a century. She died in 1818, at seventy-five years of age.

And with her we must take leave of this period, although I have by no means exhausted the

list of its celebrities. It was the grandest in theatrical annals; never before or since did so many fine actors flourish in the same space of time, or was the actor's art so profoundly studied and so well understood, and it is impossible to deny that the glory of such results, is principally due to that one incomparable genius, DAVID GARRICK.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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